



FOUNDED ON FACTS.

ESSAY

ORPHAN BOY,

(OR - - -)

Test of Innocence!

BY

M^{RS} CATHERINE CLAYARD,

Author of the "Rose of Chiricahua," "Mysterious Marriage,"

"My Native Land," "Daughter of St. Clare," "Sacred Deposit,"

"The Maidens' Heron," "Robertina," &c. &c. &c."



(LONDON.)

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"Robertina;" "Poems;" &c. &c. &c. &c.

VOL. I.

"He is yours! and he is mine!
Not yours, nor mine alone!
A friendless Orphan Boy!"

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ENTERED AT STATIONERS HALL.

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LONDON:

Published by W. and S. COUCHMAN, Throgmorton Street.

1821.

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THE
ORPHAN BOY.

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CHAPTER I.

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**A**DOLPHUS and his cousins could not sleep all night for the approaching celebration of the Christmas vacation ; which on the morning that was destined to convey them home kept them wide awake. But it never struck Adolphus that he had no home (at least no paternal home) to go to ; for he was an Orphan Boy ! but he was thoughtless and happy ; and like the skylark, his yet unbounded wishes soared in air : the sole aim of his ambition being the possession of liberty ; which, to a school-boy, may justly be termed the *ne plus ultra* of his most sanguine expectations.

The consequence was, that they began dressing themselves with all the alacrity that the nimble footed

hind runs to escape from her vigilant pursuers. Their task was speedily accomplished; and precisely at six o'clock, they were quietly seated in Sir Mildred Austincourt's travelling post chaise; and at the extremity of a beautiful hanging wood, were just five miles from his splendid and magnificent mansion.

The chaise proceeded with velocity, but Adolphus and his cousins thought otherwise; and Frederic, the elder, and the heir presumptive of Sir Mildred's family, who possessed, not only the impetuosity of youth, but a little mixture of that self-importance which is too generally allied to the knowledge of high birth and the expectation of riches, was the first to find fault with the postillion for not driving faster; and putting his head out of the chaise window, he, in addition to, "why do'nt you drive faster?" super-added (with an air of authority that was peculiar to him) "why the devil, do'nt you drive faster?" Adolphus laughed;—Edmund, his younger cousin, looked grave; while reiterated lashes sounded on the backs of Sir Mildred's horses; which were several times repeated, by the imperious command of his son and heir.

Adolphus and his cousins were now within gun-shot of the Austincourt estate, which was called, and had been called from generation to generation, Austincourt Priory; now in the possession of Sir Mildred Austincourt, the worthiest character in existence; at least, Adolphus thought the best uncle, and he was certain that he was the best father in the world. Of his aunt, lady Austincourt, much cannot be said at the present period; and as little of her all-accomplished daughters, whose actions will hereafter certify,

at a proper time and place, the charitable bent of their dispositions.

A pause, not exceeding ten minutes, followed the laugh in which Adolphus had so heartily joined, not much he fancied to the satisfaction of Edmund Austincourt, or the blunt unsophisticated manners of their postillion; who perceiving the painful condition to which he had reduced his poor beasts, at the end of the journey more strongly expressed his displeasure by the angry glance he threw at the elder Austincourt, than a whole volume of words could have done, had he spoke for a thousand years. Nor could Adolphus so suddenly account for his uttering the exclamation of—"The lord be praised there is one good heart in the family"—as he patted his horses heads when they quitted the chaise, pocketing half a crown which Edmund had slyly deposited within his hands.

Adolphus's riotous propensity to mirth was now silenced, and he checked the rude remark he was just going to make on his cousin's taciturnity.—"Edmund Austincourt is a generous creature," thought he, "and my cousin Frederic is—the son of my uncle," he thought again; "and that uncle is, the brother of my——"

The sweet name of mother stopt ere the word was half pronounced; and, for the first time in his life, Adolphus recollected that he and his cousins were very differently situated: they had a mother, nay, a father too, by whom they would soon be welcomed and embraced; but Adolphus had none:—and he felt a trickling tear making a very rapid progress over his cheek, when at this moment, he thought of Sir Mildred,—“But I have an uncle,” repeated Adolphus,



“ a worthy and affectionate uncle ; ”—And he brushed away the unbidden tear with a corner of his blue and white pocket handkerchief.

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## CHAPTER. II.

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The haughty and inflexible brow of lady Austincourt, who reclined on an elegant ottoman, and was sipping the perfume of Indian tea, that breathed its incense from the most magnificent china, relaxed much of its accustomed severity on the entrance of Adolphus and his cousins to the drawing room ; where the family had only just assembled to their usual *déjeuner*. Which family consisted of the lady of the mansion ; her eldest daughter Georgina, moulded, as it seemed from infancy, for a modern fine lady, and finished by the hand of art to move, a bright luminary in the fashionable walk of notoriety ; while her younger sister Maryanne, whose claim to wit and good humour was confessedly nothing more than a rude unmeaning laugh, a vacant stare, and a perpetual volubility expressed by an infinite deal of nothings, and a pert giggle, displayed on the most trifling occasions, sat beside her, in all the triumph of conscious pride. In addition to this family circle was a Miss Grandison, a distant relative of lady Austincourt and

Sir Mildred, who sat next the fire, in deep conversation with a gentleman whom Adolphus had never before seen at the Priory, and who had all the appearance of a foreigner of some distinction.

The improved graces of Frederic, who was the favorite of lady Austincourt, delighted her ; and she even addressed Adolphus with a degree of complacency which was by no means usual with her, observing to her daughters, “ that he was a head taller grown since she had last beheld him.” To which Miss Austincourt replied with disagreeable tartness, “ that ill weeds grew apace ;” and this being thought a piece of delicate wit by the pert Maryanne, she introduced her favorite giggle. How long it would have lasted is uncertain, had not Sir Mildred been some interruption to their mirth by saying—“ If you call this a joke, let me inform you Miss Austincourt, it is not a proper one, nor by any means appropriate ; that your cousin Adolphus is unquestionably grown admits no doubts, but that he is an ill weed I deny”—“ Stale proverbs and musty sayings are highly ridiculous,” observed Miss Grandison, “ and though I am an *Old Maid*, I completely cut them, as they are generally the forerunners of some malicious observation.” She threw a side glance at the Miss Austincourts when she made this remark, which they seemed sufficiently to understand, as it put an end to the subject.

Camilla Grandison, of all the old maids that were ever seen, was the most sprightly, good humoured, and agreeable ; she was between fifty and sixty, and in despite of fashion, would positively adhere to her former mode of dressing in her younger days ; and preferred her own hair, which was perfectly silver,

and which she wore combed over a neat roll, to any decorations of art or fashion. The rest of her dress was correspondent with this peculiar whim; and though the Miss Austincourts had at the first sight of Miss Grandison indulged the exercise of their extraordinary mirth in the most unbecoming manner, they had suddenly become converts to her way of thinking; in which they had been carefully instructed by their sagacious and prudent mamma.

Miss Grandison had no earthly relative save lady Austincourt, and that from a most distant connexion; and Miss Grandison inherited a clear estate of two thousand a year. Lady Austincourt therefore, had paid her court to her from a child: after her marriage with Sir Mildred she became more assiduous than ever to establish a permanent intimacy; she succeeded in persuading her to accept of an invitation to the Priory twice in the year; and Miss Grandison had now arrived from her seat in Wales, and was on one of her visits to lady Austincourt at this period, when Adolphus had nearly completed his fifteenth year. He was the junior of his cousins by two years, that is, Frederic and Edmund, for never could the age of the young ladies be precisely known; but as Adolphus surmised, Miss Austincourt, from her womanly appearance, must have reached her twentieth year; and the full-grown Maryanne, who exceeded her sister in a robust constitution, could not have seen less than eighteen summers. But it was one essential point with lady Austincourt to keep the age of her daughters a profound secret.—“ ’Tis no matter,” cried her ladyship, “ how old my boys are, but my girls must be always young;”—and as the Miss Austincourts

constantly wore frocks, and to use a fashionable phrase, had not yet "come out," they were thought young indeed. Lady Austincourt was a shewy woman, that is, in bulk and size; but her features, and the expression of her countenance, would have done well to have come under the denomination of the "*frigid zone*;" for no smile ever mantled there, till warmed by the solar beam of self-interest. Georgina, who greatly resembled her in person, and in this self-same quality of disposition, she set apart to reign a little queen in the great world; while Maryanne, whose brawny face she thought pretty; and whose hoyden manners perfectly enchanting, she designed to catch the unwary squire, or opulent city banker. For Frederic she had views of a different sort, which shall hereafter be told; and for Edmund, who was confessedly his father's favorite, and who inherited more good sense and beauty than she wished him to have, she cared little at all about; because he was too handsome for a boy; and too humble in his notions ever to become of consequence to the family of the Austincourts. When an infant, as she dandled him on her knee, his extreme loveliness was a source of keen regret, and secret murmurings; and Miss Grandison being on a visit at the Priory soon after he was born, and having descanted on the uncommon beauty of the child, which she called divinely handsome, the discontented mother expressed herself in the most ungracious terms.

Lady Austincourt instantly resigned little Edmund to his nursery, to which he was condemned for the space of one twelvemonth; at which Miss Grandison seriously expressed her disapprobation; and one day, when the cloth was removed after dinner, and the

children received, as they generally did, their accustomed present of an apple, or a pear, the enquiry for little Edmund was more strongly made than ever by Miss Grandison; to which his mother carelessly replied,—“That he was best in the nursery.”—“Where he has been ever since he was born I believe,” cried Sir Mildred, “however, lady Austincourt, you will this once gratify Miss Grandison and myself with a sight of the child.”

Very unwillingly did lady Austincourt comply; for she had already placed her favourite Frederic in Miss Grandison’s lap, and she secretly triumphed in the hope of his one day being her heir. But no sooner was Edmund brought in, than Miss Grandison eagerly snatched him from the arms of his nurse, and devoured him with kisses. The beautiful little creature smiled, and clinging closer to her bosom, crowed his thanks for the notice she had taken of him, to the delight of his enraptured father, and the increased ill-humour of his mother.

“Tis well,” cried lady Austincourt, “that the little brat is not old enough to be vain of the caresses that you bestow on him.”

“When he is twenty years older, I will stake my life, that it is a fault of which he will amend,” cried Sir Mildred, “but why Helen are you displeased, that out of all our children, we have but one that may be called truly handsome. I protest, the beauty of this boy seems disgusting to you.”

“What signifies beauty in a boy,” answered her ladyship, “besides, cannot I plainly see that he will rival both his brother and his sisters? Miss Grandison absolutely doats on the brat; and she never admired

any of my children before. Wilkins, take away the little moppet, for I vow I cannot endure the sight of him."

"Are you serious Lady Austincourt?" enquired Miss Grandison, while, with a pensive sigh, she gave Edmund to his nurse.

"Are you serious Helen?" echoed Sir Mildred.

"Determinedly so," answered her ladyship.

Sir Mildred and Miss Grandison exchanged looks but the latter rose from her seat, and, with a dignified air, she courtesied to lady Austincourt, and bade her good night; observing to Sir Mildred as she quitted the room, that it was her intention to set off for Wales the ensuing morning.

This resolution was actually put into practice by Miss Grandison; nor did she again revisit the priory, till she was certain her little favourite was again noticed by his mother; who thus artfully concealing her real sentiments, and assuming a virtue which she had not, induced the amiable Camilla to believe that she had mistaken her character; on which supposition, she gave into all her views, and at length yielded to her pressing entreaties, to become a fixed resident at Austincourt Priory.

## CHAPTER III.

Adolphus and his cousins, who were accustomed to rise early, could not keep pace with the fashionable hours at Austincourt Priory. They had, therefore, bounded over Sir Mildred's park long before the family were stirring, and found just sufficient time to scamper home as they were preparing breakfast. The exercise of fresh health glowed on their cheeks; and their spirits rose in proportion to the enjoyment they had received, in being at full liberty to partake of the amusements which Sir Mildred had designed for them during the period of their vacation.

The foreign gentleman whom Adolphus had seen the day before still continued to be a guest; and in addition to the party, lady Austincourt introduced a little girl, whose pale complexion and delicate looks, pronounced her to be an invalid. Her name was Theodora; and, she appeared only ten years old; but was so extremely shy and diffident, that neither Adolphus or his cousins could prevail on her to speak a single word; or eat one mouthful of the delicacies that were spread before her. They actually would have pronounced her dumb, but for the single sentence that escaped her lips of—"No, I thank you madam"—which was addressed to lady Austincourt in so low a voice, as scarcely to be heard. The foreign gentleman now smiled, and taking her hand, drew her gently toward him; but the timid little creature still remained silent; while he slightly apologized for her childish timidity,

“Which indeed,” cried he, “is not only owing to her ill-state of health, but to the climate in which she was born. There is a reserve, not to say a repelling coldness, in the females of that country, from which, I thank heaven, English women are exempt.”—His complimentary speech was accompanied with an insinuating smile, and a languishing look, directed towards the ladies, which had due effect on all but Miss Grandison, who had succeeded in getting little Theodora into a chair next her’s; while she uttered, with her usual good humour, and forgetting that count de Valmont stood in no way related to her,—“Come to me my love, and never mind that naughty papa of yours”—Instantly the pale cheeks of the little girl became flushed with crimson, and appeared glowing with resentment, if not with pride, and she hastily uttered, but with great expression,—“Not *my* papa, Madam, I never had but one, and I am very sure that is not he!”

An evident embarrassment betrayed itself in every feature of count de Valmont, in spite of the pains he took to conceal it; nor was the smile which succeeded, the effect of good humour; for having called Theodora to him, she refused to go, but without ceremony ran out of the room.

The count in a few moments disappearing, Miss Grandison exclaimed, “Whata strange little creature!”

“Perfectly savage,” observed Miss Maryanne Austincourt, “and, were it not for the very large fortune she will inherit from her father, I vow there would be no supporting the whimsicality of her behaviour.”

“Really Maryanne I am horrified at hearing you



talk so," cried lady Austincourt, "what is to be expected from the manners of a mere child? One too, who has been bred in the monastic seclusion of a hated convent; but we shall in time reform her; and, for my own part, I do not despair of one day seeing lady Theodora Percy a most accomplished creature."

Adolphus could not help observing the sudden and involuntary exclamation of his cousin Frederic; who, with astonishment and surprise expressed in every feature, eagerly demanded of his mother, "If the little pale bashful girl was indeed lady Theodora Percy."

"Unquestionably so, my love," answered her ladyship, "and I will now give you her history. She is the only child of Algernon, earl of Percy, who has so long distinguished himself, as one of the most experienced generals, the most gallant commanders, and the most accomplished gentlemen of the present age. The mother of Theodora, who was the daughter of an Italian nobleman, was a heroine in mind, but extremely delicate in constitution; and she died in consequence of accompanying his lordship on some foreign expedition, from which romantic and whimsical resolution, nothing could deter her; giving birth to Theodora amidst the tumults of a camp.

The motherless child became a stronger tie of affection to the distracted father. She was taken from the breast of her expiring mother, and consigned to the care of a black servant, the only attendant they had. For some months it was expected that the infant could not have survived; but Theodora lived, notwithstanding the predictions of all around her, and was conveyed with her nurse to a convent on the borders of Germany;

where she remained till lord Percy could find a convenient opportunity, to send her to England; fearing, lest, in that country, she might adopt a monastic life, and become a convert to the superstitious principles of the people who surrounded her. He disclosed his intentions to count de Valmont; with whom he had long been on terms of friendship; and that gentleman being well acquainted with the customs of the convent, undertook to become an ambassador for his friend, and sought an interview with the lady abbess, from whose management and protection he now withdrew the little Theodora and her nurse; and, placing her in the arms of her delighted father, exclaimed,—‘There, Percy, is your daughter, I have now performed my duty.’—‘Not yet,’ answered his lordship, ‘you must now, de Valmont, take charge of her to England. The seat of war—the perils of a camp, I cannot expose her to. My poor Theodora fell a victim to her imprudent courage; and my little darling here, would also perish amidst the hardships of a long campaign. You must, therefore, embrace the opportunity of a passage in an English vessel, and bear my treasure to the land of Great Britain; there, under the auspices of lady Austincourt, she will be safe till my return from foreign service.’—‘Tis unnecessary to say,” concluded lady Austincourt, “that count de Valmont has been faithful to his trust, and has brought me little Theodora, of whom I am to make the most;—that is” added she, “I am to — to — to —.” Her ladyship hesitated and stammered; she had made use of a most unguarded expression in the presence of her relation; and colouring deeply, she continued (for the eyes of Miss Graudison were rivetted upon her),—“I am to

have the charge of lady Theodora, and the superintendence of her education, till her father, lord Algernon Percy, claims her from my hands, or returns to England. Certainly she is a prize worth keeping; for, as the Count informs me, she will have a fortune of more than one hundred thousand pounds."

"Then the poor child need not go to market," dryly observed Miss Grandison.

Nor yet be cried three times in a village church;" answered the pert Maryanne.

"I shall like lady Theodora very well," said Frederic Austincourt, "because she will be so rich."—And the eyes of his mother spoke a meaning her tongue did not dare to express.

"And would you Edmund?" enquired Sir Mildred, "speak honestly my boy."

The beautiful complexion of Edmund Austincourt was now covered with one of nature's happiest blushes, the real tincture of modesty; and he replied.—"I cannot tell sir, much about that; but, if I like a person, I never consider *how much money* he has; and if I liked lady Theodora ever so well, it would not be for the sake of her riches."

"Well said," cried Sir Mildred, "egad, I believe thou hast spoken the truth."

"He has spoken a fiddle-tick," said lady Austincourt. "I wonder Sir Mildred you can encourage the boy in any such ridiculous nonsense. Yes, I warrant me, he will be the gentle shepherd of the family. With a crook in his hand, and a pipe in his mouth, he will wander all day long on the tops of steepy mountains, to look after a flock of sheep, and at night he will lay himself down on some lonely bank to

celebrate the beauty of a wood nymph, or make sonnets on the eyes of a butter-milk dairy-maid."

This sarcasm bore a majority in raising a laugh against Edmund Austincourt, in which even Adolphus was malicious enough to join; and notwithstanding he had his father and Miss Grandison on his side, he was dubbed the gentle shepherd by his brother Frederic, and continued to be addressed by that title for the remainder of the day; which he supported with much good humour. Nay, it was even observed at tea-time, that little Theodora was more attentive to him, than to any of the rest; which occasioned lady Austincourt to observe, with her usual acrimony—"That there was nothing so dangerous to a young man, as to have a pretty face."

"Or to a young woman either, when she is vain and conceited," said Miss Grandison; "but when she is both modest and amiable, it is surely no disadvantage to be thought handsome. For instance, now had your daughter Georgina, or Miss Maryanne there, a pretty face——"

Miss Grandison was here interrupted: for Georgina screamed,—“Good God!” cried she, “Miss Grandison, there is an odious spider crawling over the sleeve of your gown.”

“Is there, my dear?” said Miss Grandison, with great composure, as she threw the reptile from her, “then let it not creep to my bosom, for ’tis as canorous as envy. I hate to look upon it. ’Tis as mischeivous as the hawk: for the sparrow becomes the prey of the one, and the innocent fly is the victim of the other. But envy, Miss Georgina, that creeps into the human heart, is the most cruel insect of them all.

Good night lady Austincourt, pleasant dreams to you." So saying, Miss Grandison snatched up her candle, as was her usual custom, when any thing had ruffled her, and instantly repaired to her own apartment.

This mode of conduct, in one whom it was greatly her interest not to offend, generally brought lady Austincourt to order, and made her more cautious than ever of attempting to discourage the young favorite; for that Edmund was the favourite seemed very clearly perceptible to the discerning eye of her ladyship. In Theodora too, child as she was, she thought she could perceive a gleaming partiality for Edmund more than for her beloved Frederic; and this being exactly opposite to her views and expectations, she predetermined to crush it in the bud as early as possible. She, therefore, one morning, when Theodora was receiving a delicate little flower from the hands of Edmund, which he had expressly gathered and offered for her acceptance, and hearing him, as he presented it to her, utter these words,—“Lady Theodora, you admired this little flower so much last night, I thought it was a pity not to procure it for you, and here it is,”—she could no longer conceal her mortification and displeasure; especially when Theodora received it with a smile and a courtesy. But as she placed it in her bosom, her ladyship also presented her with a branch of beautiful exotics,—“There, Theodora, did you ever before see an assemblage of more beautiful flowers? A choice collection my love, and the gift-offering of my son; and you must positively wear them in your bosom the whole of this day for the sake of Frederic Austincourt.”

“I am much obliged to your ladyship,” replied the

blushing Theodora, "but I cannot wear two nosegays at once: for see, I have already got one; so pretty; and it is so sweet."—And taking the flower which Edmund had given her with an air of the most perfect *naïveté*, she fixt it in her little bosom; leaving the mortified lady Austincourt with the rejected flowers in her hand.

This incident, trifling as it was, left her ladyship a prey to inquietude; and gave rise to a supposition, which indeed almost amounted to conviction, that the childish bosom of Theodora had caught an impression of the blooming graces and fascinating exterior of her youngest son; which decidedly determined her in one point, that of using her influence with Sir Mildred to send him from the Priory.

This, indeed, was now more difficult than could be imagined; for Edmund was the favorite of his father; and what was more to be dreaded, the idol of Miss Grandison.

"What," cried lady Austincourt, as she threw the rejected flowers on the ground, "and shall *he* also be the husband of lady Theodora, the wealthy heiress of Lord Algernon Percy!—No, Frederic, this prize be thine; or never shall thy mother know again the blessing of thy smile!"

With these concluding words the enraged lady Austincourt sought the apartments of Sir Mildred; she smiled, and even attempted to take his hand.—"My dear Sir Mildred," cried she, Sir Mildred smiled too.

"I will bet any thing Helen," cried he, "that you are going to ask a favor of me: come, out with it; let us know the extent of a woman's conscience."

"Why my love, our riotous boys," said lady Austin-

court, "have now been at the Priory these seven weeks."

"Really! so long, Helen!" cried Sir Mildred, "why, then, tomorrow they shall go to school again."

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## CHAPTER IV.

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Lady Austincourt, who had now gained one of her most favourite points with her too indulgent husband, continued her unceasing solicitations, that Adolphus and his cousins should set off, bag and baggage, for Wellington Lodge, the ensuing morning; where, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Richards, they were yet to remain another year; and at the expiration of that period, were to depart for college studies at Cambridge.

For what Adolphus was designed, he was yet totally ignorant; but, he knew perfectly well, from the tenor of lady Austincourt's conversation, that he was wholly dependant on the bounty of his uncle; his father having died insolvent in the West Indies, although serving in the rank of major in one of the distant colonies; and his mother soon fell a sacrifice to excess of grief for his loss, and survived but a few months after his decease; consigning the Orphan Boy to the protection of the only relative she possessed in the world, her brother, Sir Mildred Austincourt; in whose

arms she breathed her last sigh. In the agonies of death she could only murmur,—"Be a father to my child."

Sir Mildred, who had loved his sister tenderly, neglected not to pay the last duties to his favorite Isabella.

"Poor Boy," cried he, holding Adolphus to his breast with all the warmth of undisguised affection, "poor boy! fatherless and motherless, you shall yet retain the affection of both, in the kindness and protection of lady Austincourt and myself." Lady Austincourt, however, received the little orphan with her accustomed frigidity. As Sir Mildred placed him in her arms,—“Remember Helen,” cried he, “when you look on this poor child, that you are a mother yourself, and that while your own children possess the inestimable blessing of a parent’s indulgence, that he has none to bestow the like attention on *him*; the loss of which gives him a double claim to your protection. Be kind to him Helen; he is my own nephew; and the legacy of an expiring sister. As such I shall regard him; as such I shall cherish him; and as such I shall expect he will be received into the bosom of my family.”

“You are amazingly particular,” cried lady Austincourt, with some asperity, “I do not know Sir Mildred that I was ever willingly unmindful of any of your requests; but, if it is your pleasure, that I should neglect my own children, to look after this boy, it is an office I must positively decline.”

“You can perform the office of humanity, Helen,” answered Sir Mildred, much hurt by sentiments so little congenial to his own, “without any detriment to



your own children, I shall, therefore, expect that you will at least act the part of a christian to your husband's nephew; and, I further insist, that from this very hour, Adolphus Walsingham be considered as such, under the roof of Austincourt Priory."

Lady Austincourt muttered something; but that something was not permitted to reach the ear of Sir Mildred; and a very large piece of plumb cake, presented to Adolphus by one of his cousins, very soon reconciled him to his situation.

Blest period of youthful innocence! delightful season of unalloyed happiness! why are ye not given to maturity?

Vain hope! can the blooming rose attain its full perfection, without the invasion of the canker worm, that would destroy it? Oh! never!—but, to proceed.

When Adolphus and his cousins were so uncere- moniously informed by lady Austincourt, that they must prepare to return to Wellington Lodge at an early hour the ensuing morning, Frederic would by no means consent, and his fond mother agreed to allow him three days of grace; which time was to be passed in such recreations, as he himself thought most agreeable.

"Suppose then, mother, you give us a dance and supper," cried Frederic, "Edmund, Adolphus, would you not like that amazingly?"

They nodded their willing assent, and lady Austincourt assured them, that they should certainly have a little gala the night before they returned to Wellington Lodge.

"And now I think of it, Frederic," cried she, "had you not better go in time and solicit the hand of lady

Theodora to be your partner in the dance. There is no knowing, but what she may one day be your partner for life; either she or one of the Miss Montgomeries your father designs for you. I promise you, so go, do as you are desired."

Frederic flew hastily to obey his mother's commands, which produced a different sensation in Edmund, for he became paler than ashes.

"Are you not well Edmund?" cried Adolphus; to which, as he did not reply, Adolphus made no further enquiry; but he could not help observing, that the little bashful Theodora, at this early period of life, had unconsciously awakened the first dawning of youthful passion in his breast. A circumstance he then much regretted, as it would only be productive of misery to him: but how little did Adolphus foresee, that the peace of another individual would also be involved in it.

The expected evening of the gala arrived, and a selection of youthful guests, expressly invited for the occasion, assembled, to partake of the amusements it afforded them; much to the satisfaction of the triumphant mother; as she beheld her darling son open the ball with lady Theodora, whom she had magnificently dressed; and, for her age, she looked lovely beyond description. Nor could Adolphus have conceived so great an improvement to have taken place in so short a time in her shape and complexion; the former looking as if delicately moulded by the hands of the Graces, and the latter, as if breathing the first sweets of spring.

Count de Valmont took his departure for Germany

the day before the evening of the gala, after being, for many hours, in deep conversation with lady Austin-court, the subject of which remained a profound secret.

"Lady Theodora is not handsome," observed Adolphus to his cousin Edmund. "it is the smile of inexpressible harmony, and the look of almost indefinable softness that renders the fascinating little creature so delightful. Don't you think so Edmund?"

"Miss Montgomery is a great deal handsomer," he replied, "that is, I think Miss Julia Montgomery—

Edmund stopped and coloured, and appeared confused; but Adolphus found that he was by no means ingenious in his reply, for his eyes were riveted on lady Theodora as he spoke.

"It is true Miss Montgomery is more beautiful, but lady Theodora is ten thousand times more fascinating," said Adolphus; to which observation his cousin Edmund remained silent.

The daughters of Sir Robert Montgomery were elegant girls; and it would have been difficult to have pronounced which of the two inherited the greatest share of beauty and good humour. But, Adolphus thought, had he been at liberty to have decided on their merits, he would not have hesitated in giving the palm to the younger sister, who was called Julia; her sister Annabella, being too masculine to accord with the idea he had formed of female beauty; though she exactly suited the taste of his cousin Frederic.

"The eldest Miss Montgomery," cried he, "is the finest girl in the room; and her sister is the prettiest," replied Adolphus.

"What the little flaxen-haired girl, who danced with Edmund," enquired Frederic.

"The same, Miss Julia Montgomery (said Adolphus)."

"A mere waxen doll with blue eyes and a baby's face (uttered Frederic Austincourt with a sneer, supposing that this was the taste of his cousin Adolphus), no, if you come to that, what think you of lady Theodora Percy? did you ever see a pair of finer eyes than that little bashful gipsy has got in your life? but what signifies her eyes or any thing else? she has got the main point in the calculation of a woman's beauty."

"And what is that?" enquired Adolphus.

"One hundred thousand pounds" answered Frederic, and drawing the bed-curtains close around them, they fell fast asleep.

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## CHAPTER V.

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From the period of Adolphus and his cousins returning to Wellington Lodge to the succeeding twelve-month when they were to quit it, nothing material occurred either to give them pleasure or pain, till they received a mandate from Sir Mildred Austincourt to set out for the Priory. Lady Austincourt during the whole space of the twelvemonth had contrived to keep them from paying their annual visit at the time of three vacations, because she had taken it into her head that she must make a journey to the metropolis, it

being thought necessary by her ladyship, as her daughters were now actually *old enough* to "come out." The consequence was a trip to London; where Miss Georgina and Miss Maryanne (now full grown indeed) underwent the accustomed ceremonies of a first introduction, and from newspaper report, Adolphus and his cousins very soon learned, that the Miss Austincourts having made their *entré* *shone* very conspicuously, from an obvious circumstance, they wore a profusion of *diamonds*; but it could not be remembered that much was said on their youth, their elegance, or their beauty. They were come out however, and that was sufficient for the present with lady Austincourt.

Neither Sir Mildred, nor lady Theodora, had been witnesses of this very important event in the lives of the Miss Austincourts; for Sir Mildred was confined with a fit of the gout, and Theodora was thought much too young to venture beyond the boundaries of Austincourt Priory. Besides, what with masters of every description, and governesses almost of every order, Theodora was kept constantly employed; lady Austincourt having left strict charge with Sir Mildred, and also with Madame Duval the superintendant governess, that she should be kept close to her studies. Word was likewise given to Mrs. Closefist the house-keeper, that lady Theodora should be served with scanty dinners and light suppers, fearful that her shape, which promised to be of the most gossamer description, would receive an injury from the effects of a too indulgent appetite.

Kind, considerate lady Austincourt! and happy Theodora to possess so zealous a friend!

However, in a few days her ladyship's injunctions

were totally forgotten by Sir Mildred, and almost neglected by Mrs. Closefist, who suffered the little girl to eat and drink whatever she liked best ; and Sir Mildred was never so well pleased as when he saw her tripping over the lawn, as playful and as elastic as the young fawn, and fresh as the flowers that grew beneath her hand : for Theodora amongst all her favorite amusements delighted in the cultivation of flowers, and the study of botany. An elegant greenhouse therefore, filled with the most fragrant shrubs and blooming exotics, had long been appropriated to her use, and in this she passed many hours when the fashionable Georgina and the indolent Maryanne were killing time, either with some last new novel, or in the speculation of something to remove freckles and improve the complexion. The daily advertisements in the papers amply furnished them with intelligence so pleasing, and information so instructive ; but they never soared one step beyond this ; Miss Maryanne could not bear to read, and Georgina, in the absence of lady Austincourt, could not bear to write.

Their visit to London, and long continuance in it, could not but be a most seasonable relief to Theodora ; who, in spite of her endeavours to conceal it, felt no great predilection for their society ; yet of the three ladies, lady Austincourt was her favorite ; and she would have liked her much better were it not for the continual ringing in her ears the praises of her son Frederic. This was done so repeatedly, that Theodora young as she was, suspected her ladyship must have some particular motive ; and though she cautiously avoided giving her offence by contradicting her assertions, “ that Frederic Austincourt was the best creature

in existence," yet she was silent whenever he was the theme of her conversation ; a circumstance, which did not escape the observation of lady Austincourt, and which greatly mortified her aspiring hopes ; yet she thought that perseverance would do much ; and that by a trial of further skill and management, the unwary and youthful Theodora would in time be brought to look on Frederic in the light of an affianced lover, if not an affianced husband. Count de Valmont having promised her also to use his influence and interest with her father, over whose mind he possessed unbounded sway, she did not doubt but her wish would be accomplished ; being persuaded that Sir Mildred, wishing for the aggrandizement of their son, would give into all her sentiments respecting her views on the wealthy heiress of the earl of Percy.

But in this, had her ladyship considered for one moment on the character of her husband, she would have found herself mistaken ; for the feelings of a father and the principles of an honest man would have made the excellent Sir Mildred shudder, from offering proposals that could in any way be deemed the sacrifice of another man's child.

It was almost impossible to say the pains lady Austincourt took to please the artless disposition of little Theodora, which nature had formed of one of the finest order, although it did not promise to be one of the happiest ; for Theodora would weep when any incident awakened her sensibility to the sufferings of others ; and her generosity to relieve the wants of her fellow creatures very soon became a subject of reprehension with lady Austincourt, while to Sir Mildred it was the constant theme of admiration and praise. But the

money was her own; and his lordship being liberal in the extreme in the remittances he made to lady Austincourt for the maintenance of his daughter, as well as in the expences of her education, she could not with decency complain of her extravagance, or refuse with propriety her request to be supplied with more money. One morning however, when Theodora spread her empty purse on the table, which her ladyship had only filled the evening before, to express her surprise seemed but natural; though she could scarcely conceal her displeasure when Theodora declared she had not a farthing left of her monthly allowance.

—"What not out of ten pounds my love!" said lady Austincourt, "you surely mistake, as it is very clear to me that you have been either robbed of this money, or have given it away foolishly."

"It is true that I have given it away," answered Theodora, her cheeks glowing with resentment, "but I should be very sorry if your ladyship thought foolishly; for indeed it was to save a poor family from ruin."

"Tell me whom you have relieved, and it is very possible that I may change my opinion," said lady Austincourt, not willing to let Theodora see that she discouraged her in acts of charity, "but indeed my lovely Theodora, ten pounds is so very large a sum, that I am afraid you have been led into some error respecting the objects of your charity."

"Oh! I am very sure they were deserving ten times that sum," replied Theodora with a warmth that acted like an opposite, for it chilled the bosom of lady Austincourt, "for," continued Theodora, "it was no other than Fanny Roseberry's father and mother who were



turned out of their farm yesterday, because they could not pay their rent; and Fanny Roseberry is such a good girl, I could not bear her tears, and so — so I gave her the money."

"And had she really the audacity to take it?" enquired lady Austincourt with an air of asperity which she could no longer repress, for it was by her ladyship's *express desire* that the steward had been *compelled to turn farmer Roseberry out of his farm, for private reasons best known to her ladyship.*

"But I assure your ladyship that it was not Fanny's fault," answered Theodora, "for I insisted on her accepting of my purse, and going with it that precious minute to her distressed father and mother, who had not a bed to lay their heads on, nor a morsel to put in their mouths, and so Fanny went according to my request, and so —"

"Well my dear, I have heard quite enough of this romantic tale," interrupted lady Austincourt pettishly, yet softening her voice as much as she possibly could from its natural acrimony, "it was certainly very good of you to assist the poor wretches; you have an undoubted right to do what you please with your own money, though I dare say your father lord Percy would not choose you should throw it away; especially when I inform you that Fanny's father and mother are very unworthy objects of your munificence; I cannot call it charity. They can pay, but they won't pay, and that being the case, it is very right and proper they should be treated accordingly; as to Fanny, she is a pert forward minx to receive such a present from you without my knowledge, and she shall quit my service if ever I know her guilty of the like impertinence again."

At the conclusion of this speech, of the imperious lady Austincourt's, Theodora, to her no small confusion and amazement, burst into tears; never before had lady Austincourt as she thought spoke so unkindly; and never till now was her little susceptible bosom so sensitive of resentment, and she sobbed out—"If Fanny has been guilty of a fault, the fault was mine; and I would much rather that your ladyship should punish me, than a poor girl who cannot help herself."

Lady Austincourt, who now found she had gone beyond her depth, like a skilful pilate, was obliged to steer with more caution, and she threw her arms round the offended Theodora—"punish you my sweet angel," exclaimed she, "punish you! how can that little tongue of your's pronounce such cruel words. You know my sweet love I would not for the world say any thing to give you pain. For heaven's sake my dear creature dry those eyes! gracious! what would Frederic Austincourt say to see those pretty eyes spoiled with crying? why he would say"—

—"I am not thinking of Mr. Frederic Austincourt," uttered Theodora pettishly: this her ladyship observed, but would not by any means seem to notice, though it stung her to the heart; and she replied with a cunning archness, and throwing into her countenance as much insinuation as possible;—

"Indeed my sweet Theodora that is not kind of you, for I dare say Frederic is thinking of you."

Theodora was silent, and her ladyship at the same moment that she employed herself in supplying the contents of the empty purse with fresh ammunition, contrived in the most coaxing tone to rally her.—

"Now I will give you one of the prettiest birds in my

aviary if you will tell me Theodora," said she, "that you were just then thinking of the '*gentle shepherd*,' my Edmund, whom I declare I shall call the gentle shepherd as long as he lives."

Theodora did not betray the slightest emotion at the mention of Edmund's name; but in a very affecting and determined manner she pronounced—I was *just then thinking of my father.*"

Lady Austincourt coloured; and coloured so deeply, that I do not know whether her blushes were not even perceptible through a deep mask of French rouge; and it was with infinite difficulty that her ladyship could stifle a certain awkward sensation which she felt rising in her throat when she kissed the pale cheek of Theodora, as they retired to their respective apartments.

"It is very clear to me," cried she, as she entered her dressing room, "that this unaccountable little gothic mandlin is not attracted by either of my sons:—surely that great tall stripling, that Adolphus Walsingham—Further lady Austincourt did not choose to give utterance to her thoughts. And poor Mrs. Flounce her attendant suffered very materially from her capricious humour during the operation of dressing her ladyship for dinner.

Mrs. Flounce did her best, and called to her aid the all-powerful auxiliary of flattery; but all would not do; for looking in the glass when her toilet was completed, her ladyship exclaimed—"Why Flounce! have you taken leave of your senses: or do you intend that I should be a fright for the remainder of the evening?"

"I mean that your ladyship shall look as you generally do," said Mrs. Flounce.

“ And how is that ?” demanded her ladyship.

Flounce who was now put to her last wits instantly replied, “ like an angel.”

It is not certain whether lady Austincourt’s ill humour was appeased or not, but her accommodating abigail was instantaneously dismissed with these words ; —“ Well child, I think I shall do for to day.”

“ Do for to-day,” muttered Flounce as she tript down stairs, glad to escape from her persecution ; “ do for to day,” repeated she, “ I think I have given your ladyship a dose that might do for a twelvemonth.”

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## CHAPTER VI.

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Miss Grandison who had peremptorily refused lady Austicourt’s request of accompanying her to London, was at length compelled to yield to her pressing intreaties ; Georgina declaring that she should expire if her dear sweet Miss Grandison was not to be of their party ; and Miss Maryanne also saying that she should never be able to survive the awful ceremony of being presented without her dear Miss Grandison being there to witness it. Miss Grandison looked serious and exclaimed—“ Mercy on me my dear girls ! if both your deaths are to be occasioned by my not going, why I believe that I must for once make a fool of myself : to London therefore I will accompany you,

though it is of all other places the most odious to me; so far I will oblige you; but no drawing room. There I must positively be excused. Heaven preserve me! what would the world say of Camilla Grandison the old maid being seen in the drawing room of St. James's! Miss Maryanne who had taken out of her pink satin reticule her cambric handkerchief on the pretence of blowing her nose, could scarcely smother an affected giggle, in which Miss Georgina would have joined, but a look from her mother had the desired effect of making her assume the appearance of good manners, whether possessed or not. But the impertinence of Miss Maryanne did not wholly escape the observation of Miss Grandison, with whom this young lady was by no means a favorite, and she determined to punish her for it at some future opportunity.

Adolphus and his cousins had the good fortune to arrive at Austincourt Priory three days before the expected party had left the metropolis; a circumstance not in the smallest degree regretted by any of them, as those three days were passed in a delightful intercourse with Sir Mildred and the fascinating Theodora, improved in every grace, and heightened into every beauty that constitutes expression; her complexion had lost that pallid hue which seemed to rank her among the list of valetudinarians; and her figure, though excessively delicate, was moulded with the neatest symmetry, accompanied by a simplicity that seemed alone the offspring of nature, in which art was not thought necessary to have the slightest space.

It was not however till after many hours that they were gratified with her society, so strictly bound was Theodora to the plan which lady Austincourt had left

for the prosecution of her studies, which Sir Mildred more than once insisted she should break through; and notwithstanding the austere looks and chilling deportment of Mrs. Duval, the all-accomplished governor, he demanded the company of his little favorite soon after they had dined: and she came blushing like the roseate morn, the smiles of good humour playing on her dimpled cheek, just as Sir Mildred with good emphasis and discretion had uttered the following words:—"But I do insist, positively insist, that lady Theodora Percy comes into the room this evening and makes a dish of tea for the boys and myself; and so you may go and tell Madame Duval, I will have no more of her impertinent jargon, and no less ridiculous excuses. What does lady Austincourt mean by attempting to make the daughter of lord Percy a female pedant? Heaven preserve me from seeing Theodora a petticoat philosopher."—At this moment lady Theodora entered the room; she welcomed Adolphus and his cousins to the priory with the most unaffected cordiality; and shook hands with each of them without one atom of that conscious superiority of rank and fortune which makes the possessor both odious and contemptible, as it betrays a contracted mind; and is as often the effect of an ill-directed education, as the offspring of a corrupted heart.

"So Theodora," cried Sir Mildred, "thou hast escaped child from thy persecuting argus, and like a bird flown from thy cage to breathe of the sweets of liberty. Come, sit down and talk to these boys, they have been anxious to see you I assure you, and ever since they arrived they have talked of nothing else; but now you are come you see they are dumb. Zounds!

when I was a boy, I would have kissed a pretty girl if all the great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers in the world had been present."

Notwithstanding this very encouraging address of Sir Mildred, neither Adolphus nor his cousins durst avail themselves of his kind invitation to salute lady Theodora, whose fair cheek was tinged with blushes of the deepest dye; while an air of modesty which was peculiar to her kept her silent nearly the whole of the evening.

Whatever Edmund Austincourt thought of the improved beauty and accomplishments of the young heiress could not be surmised, for he preserved a profound silence while the volubility of his brother Frederic, never ceased in her praise.—"She would be a divine creature" cried he, "if there was a little more of her, and she was not so confoundly shy, but as I said before, Theodora is rich and wants nothing more to set her off in the eyes of the world, but the bags of money which her father will leave her sole mistress of, and curse me, matrimony is such a bitter pill, that by the lord it requires something sweet, to make it go down, does it not? my grave cousin Walsingham."

"As you please," replied Adolphus, "scarcely attending to his remark, for in truth, the thoughts of the Orphan Boy were employed on a very different subject, and that was his future destiny in life; he was no longer a child he reflected, nor ought he to expect that his uncle, worthy as he was, would take from his own children their inheritance to give to him, neither had he passed by unregarded the cold looks which lady Austincourt and her daughters sometimes cast upon him, nor the oblique hints which they as frequently

threw out on his orphan state; more than once his feelings had suffered from the petulant warmth of his cousin Frederic's temper, at the same moment that he received a balsam to the wound, by the unvaried sweetness and gentle manners of Edmund, for whose sake he would have endured much greater taunts, as he sincerely felt for him the affection he so truly merited. As his mind was occupied with these reflections on the second day after his arrival at the priory, he found his spirits at intervals so greatly depressed, that he could not join with cheerfulness in their accustomed amusements; had he known however that his dejection would have been perceived, he would have exerted every effort in his power to have concealed the real situation of his mind from all human observation, and more especially from his uncle, whom of late he often remarked gazing at him till an unconscious tear would start from his eyes; and once Adolphus heard the almost inarticulate sentence of "poor Isabella" pronounced by him with indescribable emotion, and as he took leave of him for the night, he felt his hand clasp his with more warmth than he could remember from the period of his infancy. "Adolphus" cried he, "I have appointed to-morrow to be set apart for the examination of your studies, and though, I doubt not but you have been sedulously attentive to every branch of your education, yet I must find it such as will befit you for the more rational and active part of life. I design you for a Gentleman and a scholar, but a honest man, which last title I hope to confer on you to the latest hour of my existence—at twelve o'clock to-morrow you must meet me in my study, where, also, I will appoint Frederic and Edmund;



you have a strange world to encounter with, and I fear from the resemblance you bear to your mother, you carry with you also that too nice sensitive feeling which must ever expose a delicate mind to the rude censures of the vulgar and the illiterate, you must shut your heart to this intruder my boy, or you will infallibly err against common sense, which you will find a most necessary ingredient in the sum total of all worldly happiness." Adolphus pressed the hand which was held out to him with reverential regard; but notwithstanding Sir Mildred's injunctions, Adolphus could not chide back the tear which had fallen towards the conclusion of the speech he had addressed to him.

In youth's high season life presents an unvaried landscape of blooming verdure, and strong indeed must be those impressions which can alter its complexion or change its glowing tints to scenes of sickly hue, and though Sir Mildred had not communicated his intentions for what he designed him, yet that he would probably do so the very next morning was sufficiently a subject of contemplation for to keep Adolphus wide awake the whole of the night, and as he now occupied a separate apartment from that of his cousins, he put on his clothes as soon as the dawn appeared, and found himself nearly lost in the middle of Sir Mildred's park, when his attention was directed towards a copse so thickly shaded that its windings were impervious to the sunny rays, or gleaming moon, but from which he could plainly distinguish the sound of a low, soft, and murmuring voice, evidently that of a female, and which was often interrupted by one loud and impetuous, and to which Adolphus was no

stranger, for it was that of Frederic Austincourt; he moved with as much alacrity as possible from a spot he now considered sacred.—“For if” cried Adolphus, “curiosity be inherent in the human heart, why not honour, which is also its inmate, have equal influence over our sensations? again the voice of the female whose tones he could not help fancying were familiar to his ear, broke out but with stronger emphasis than ever into low murmurs, as it seemed of tender reproach, which were answered by her companion at every sentence with a loud laugh, and a passionate exclamation of “*fool, simpleton.*”

Adolphus now instantly quitted the side of the copse with a kind of lurking inclination about him, to obtain a glance of the fair incognita, with whom Frederic was conversing, but to his great relief he found a blush of shame rising on his cheek, and he walked without intermission till he was within ten yards of Sir Mildred’s plantations before he could recover his *self possession*.—Ah! curiosity, “cried he,” I have for once got the better of thee, for tempting as thou art, thou canst never vanquish honour, in whose white livery I neither will betray myself, nor meanly pry into the secrets of another.

## CHAPTER VII.

Adolphus found all parties had assembled in the breakfast room but his cousin Frederic and lady Theodora Percy. "Surely" thought he, "the unseen female, with whom Frederic was conversing, could never have been the delicate little Theodora; he scorned the suggestion from the extreme timidity of her character, yet he knew not why, the sensation which this very suggestion started into his mind, made him very uneasy, and he beheld Theodora, who presently joined them with the most unaffected and unembarrassed manner, take her place at the table with perhaps less pleasure than he had ever seen her before.—But why he did feel so, was a question which at this period Adolphus forgot to ask himself. It was not till the second cup had been handed round, that Frederic made his appearance, but he was in high spirits and talked with his usual volubility, while the toast and the butter was done ample justice to in the exercise of his appetite.

—"Good morning to your nightcap," cried Sir Mildred, "why Frederic thou hast slept well my boy, we have waited near an hour for you from our usual repast, and an apology is at least due to the only young lady who at present graces our table."

"O lady Theodora is so good humoured that I am persuaded she will easily pardon an omission which was by no means intentional," said Frederic.

Theodora received this apology with a smile, but at the same moment with a look so archly directed towards him, that his cheek flushed with crimson, and Adolphus

again thought of the copse with increasing inquietude, he knew not what to think, or what to surmise, for he was beginning to suspect that Theodora possessed a spark of coquetry in her disposition, which in all females he despised.

Edmund was grave, and Adolphus thought more pensive than usual, and his attentions to lady Theodora, though perfectly respectful, seemed constrained, while Frederic stationed at her elbow, at every sentence uttered a compliment to her praise, even where it was by no means necessary; but how far Theodora herself received this unmeaning adulation with satisfaction could not be devised, as the little conversation she held with Frederic Austincourt, was polite and affable, but nothing more, she was never familiar with any of them; indeed, sometimes, Adolphus imagined that when her looks were directed towards him, she was more than usually reserved, and cold.—“Ah!” thought he, “the children of poverty are seldom singled out to meet the cordial smile, or made to feel the genial warmth of friendship. Theodora is rich, and Adolphus is poor: already has she learned the gross distinction between poverty and affluence, and yet so early to imbibe such mercenary principles, ’tis strange! but why strange—reflected Adolphus—her *preceptress* is lady Austincourt. From these reflections, certainly not much in favor of the young heiress, he was roused by a summons from his uncle; and his heart underwent a change of sensations as new as they were pleasing.

“My Uncle,” exclaimed Adolphus, “my worthy uncle, in meeting thee I do indeed behold the only friend I possess in this wide expanse of earthly happiness. Thou art not mercenary,—no,—Thou art the

general friend of humanity,—the friend, alas! the only friend of the orphan Boy.

Adolphus entered Sir Mildred's study with a countenance in which might have been traced each movement of his heart; that heart now throbbed with gratitude. He was alone, and scarce had the appellation of dear boy escaped his lips, when Adolphus burst into a torrent of tears. Sir Mildred was affected, and holding out his hand towards him with his accustomed kindness, he exclaimed,—“why Adolphus, this is not well done to catch me in one of my rainy day humours, with a face like Don Quixote. Why what is the matter boy, and what art whimpering for? “dost want a top to spin or a rocking horse to ride on. “I want nothing Sir,” replied Adolphus, endeavouring, to get the better of his emotions, which he feared had hitherto displeased him, what can I want? your kindness leaves me not a wish ungratified, your bounty supplies me with every thing. I have no thought that is not connected with my gratitude towards you, and your approbation is the proudest aim of my ambition. “Well, well,” cried Sir Mildred, brushing away a tear which had stolen a march on him, for he seemed to smile with mirthful good humour, “I will have no more of this I promise you: I verily believe you are a good youth; let that suffice, when I tell you it is my intention to provide for you handsomely. I shall send you to college with your cousins, and though my eldest son, will at my decease, most naturally and undoubtedly become my heir, yet you shall possess an inheritance wholly independant of him or his brother, in which, I shall not rank you inferior with the rest of my children, while you remain at col-

lege your remittance will be on an equal par with Frederic and Edmund, when your studies shall be completed, we will then talk of further plans, and the choice of profession, which shall ultimately be left to your own decision."

At this most noble and disinterested proof of Sir Mildred's generosity, Adolphus became so affected, that on seeing his cousins enter the study, he was obliged to retire for a few moments, in order to suppress feelings, of which though he had no cause to be ashamed, yet he would willingly hide from the observation of his excellent uncle, for whom he felt a veneration approaching almost to a celestial being.

Frederic Austincourt, who had no profession to embrace, had nothing in contemplation but to move in the easy sphere of a modern fine gentleman, who was one day to inherit his father's title and possessions, held but a short conference with Sir Mildred, relative to the management of his future studies, for he was by nature gay, volatile, thoughtless, vain, and indolent, and the small progress he had made in his education was indeed superficial when compared with the enlightened mind and improved accomplishments of his brother Edmund, whose rational turn of disposition and gentle manners disposed him for the church, for which nature had likewise eminently formed him. His person being manly and graceful, his voice clear and harmonious, and the expression of his countenance divinely beautiful. No sooner had Edmund disclosed to his father his intention of wishing to take holy orders, than a loud laugh of derision burst from the lips of his ironical brother.

"Did I not, always prophesy Adolphus," cried he,

"that Edmund would be a parson? most reverend divine! when you take holy orders do admit me one of your congregation, my life on't the very first sermon you preach will be for the reformation of the morals of your incorrigible brother. A look more severe than ever Adolphus could remember in his whole life, now shot from the eyes of Sir Mildred.

"Reformation to your morals, Mr. Frederic Austincourt," cried he, "I hope sir, your morals do not stand in need of reformation at present; when they do, you have a father who may not chuse to spare you, or suffer you to escape from reprehension, however light you may think on the subject of your raillery." Frederic, if he felt not his father's just reproof, looked abashed even to confusion, but with his usual nonchalance he replied: "on my soul I meant no offence Sir, not any I assure you, only when I looked in Edmund's *grate* face.—" You looked in the face of your brother," added Sir Mildred, "and a brother is not the most proper object you can thing of marking out as a fit subject for your ridicule; in future, I hope you will be more cautious, lest you give an offence I shall not so easily pardon."—With these words Sir Mildred walked gravely out of his study, leaving Adolphus and his cousins to follow as they pleased. Frederic, though he bit his lips and reddened a little with vexation in the presence of his father, now burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter, declaring that "what he had uttered was a monstrous good joke, and that the old boy need not have kicked up such a dust about it.

"For let me die," cried he, "if I could help laughing at the idea of seeing Edmund mount the pulpit,

to the view of all the country jockins, farmers fat wives, and starched old maids, in the neighbourhood of Leicestershire.\* Zounds and the devil! now I think of it, he may stand a chance of making a conquest there, as well as any where else. There will be such turning up of the whites of eyes, such sighings, and such groanings, and so many ah's and oh's when the clerk cries Amen, that after he has preached three-times in the parish church, who knows but he may lead some pious spinster to the hymeneal altar three weeks afterwards? but by all that is lovely and bewitching, "I'm off" continued Frederic, "on the wing like a skylark, for there is lady Theodora gone to water her flowers, the fairest of which, does not look half so blooming as herself,—sweet little soul, what an innocent she is.

"You surely do not take lady Theodora for a fool," cried Edmund, "no," answered Frederic, with a sort of half sneer, "she is sensible enough for a woman.—I don't like women to be too sensible, it wont do,—but I must talk her out of this romantie passion for flowers. Zounds, now I think of it, I should hate a wife always boring one to death about the healing balsam of a plant, or the colour of a carnation, let me but see that colour mount to her cheeks, and the sparkling lustre in her eyes, and I care not for any other accomplishment: so I am off to little Theodora, to hoax her out of her whimsical employment. "A young woman might be much worse employed, do you not think so Edmund," cried Adolphus, as he leaned his arm pensively on the chair, which Frederic had quitted.

"Or an old woman either," answered Edmund, "for they never cease to talk of scandal, condemning



without one spark of lenity the very follies of which they themselves have been guilty when equally young and thoughtless, with perhaps not half so good a heart to excuse them for it."

"Ah Edmund!" cried Adolphus, "we must not expect to find many such characters as Camilla Grandison, who is in herself blameless, but is charitable to the feelings of her own sex: were every old maid thus, surely the shafts of ridicule would not be pointed at the whole community; and men, if they cannot love would learn to treat them with respect."

Edmund Austincourt's sentiments and those of his cousin were for the most part congenial, and as he assented very cordially to those which Adolphus had last expressed, they strolled arm in arm together round the plantation of the Priory; and on their return thither, were met by an old, but of late a very unfortunate, tenant of Sir Mildred's, whom lady Austincourt had a twelvemonth before caused to be turned out of his little farm, and to the relief of whose distressed family lady Theodora had so generously contributed. Adolphus always held a respectful deference towards age, especially when misfortune and calamity added to the catalogue of its misfortunes.

The eldest daughter of farmer Roseberry had from a child been brought up in the service of lady Austincourt, and was perhaps, from the education which her ladyship had given her, far superior to her humble situation, which she was taught to feel and to experience every hour in the capacity of lady's maid to the Miss Austincourts; who, while they invented every species of ill humour to torment her, envied her the superiority of those personal charms with which Fanny

Roseberry was eminently gifted; her face and form being exquisitely lovely. This lady Austincourt very soon discerned, and for this very cause, kept her from observation as much as she possibly could in the priory. Notwithstanding her ladyship's precaution however, Fanny Roseberry was sometimes seen; and once seen, her beauty became the general topic of conversation with all the young gentlemen who visited the Priory; and with none more than with Frederic Austincourt himself. Frequently when his mother was out of hearing had Adolphus heard him declare, that Fanny Roseberry was a girl quite suited to his taste; and conclude his eulogium in a style of such warm admiration, as often made Adolphus surmise would at one period or other prove disadvantageous to her situation, if not dangerous to her repose. When farmer Roseberry therefore informed Edmund and Adolphus that he had the good fortune to be re-instated again in his farm, to which was also added one hundred acres more of land, and that by the *kind intercession* of Mr. Frederic Austincourt, Adolphus could not help exchanging looks with Edmund, which they interpreted in silence; and both now trembled for the happiness of the beautiful, young, and as they then thought, the innocent Fanny.

The day following, the hitherto little and agreeable party were interrupted by the arrival of lady Austincourt and her now highly-finished daughters; when we say finished, it is to be presumed that they were completely finished, for more could not be done nor added to render them fashionable fine ladies. It was very plain also to be perceived that, the return of the lovely Fanny added in no inconsiderable degree to the

enjoyments and fine animated spirits of Mr. Frederic Austincourt, who, under pretence of being in his sisters' dressing rooms, had now too many and frequent opportunities of both seeing Fanny and conversing with her: what advantages he took of these opportunities will be seen in the course of this history.

That there was an alteration in the Miss Austincourts since their visit to London could not reasonably be denied, for Miss Georgina was more disgusting, by a display of arrogance which was insufferable, and Miss Maryanne more ridiculous than ever by an affectation which was exerted on the most trifling occasion, and which her masculine person by no means lessened; her complexion never good was now heightened by a mask of deep rouge, very unfavorable to the expression of her large black staring eyes. Miss Austincourt, though she did not rouge so highly as her sister, added to her sallow cheeks a quantity of white paint, which sometimes made her look ghastly: but as she had a predilection for being thought a sleeping beauty (her eyes which were of a light grey having a dull, heavy, and vapid expression), she naturally conceived it would give a languishing delicacy to her sickly and inanimate countenance. So the white rose and the red rose now vied with each other which should conquer most, the one by insipidity, and the other by disgusting flippancy. Miss Grandison, to finish the group, appeared like herself, the good-humoured picture of pleasant eccentricity; wounding the feelings of no one; dignified in her own sentiments; and yet adhering to her own opinions without departing from good manners.

Whatever lady Austincourt thought of the improve-

ment of her darling Frederic, she at this moment was pleased to do justice to her youngest son, whom she declared was a perfect Adonis.—“And Adolphus Walsingham too,” said she, as she glanced coldly towards him) : why the boy is grown out of my knowledge ;—but bless me Sir Mildred, what have you done with lady Theodora ? why do I not find her here in the drawing room to welcome my return home ?”

“That is a question you must ask yourself,” replied Sir Mildred, “for upon my life your ladyship left such hard restrictions to be imposed on her that, had I permitted them to have been put in force, the poor girl would by this time have been as white as a turnip and as thin as a weasel, instead of looking as you shall now presently see, blooming as a little Hebe, and elastic as one of my young fawns.”

“Upon my word Sir Mildred,” answered her ladyship, “you would spoil the finest system of education in the world by your excessive indulgence : lady Theodora is not her own mistress you will recollect ; and it is by no means proper that a girl like her should have too much liberty.”

“Oh mama ! spare your eloquence,” drawled out Miss Georgina with her eyes half shut, “for nothing human will ever make Theodora forget her gothic ignorance.”

“And pray Miss Austincourt,” cried Sir Mildred, highly displeased with the rancour and envy which his daughter had betrayed, “what do you know about her gothic ignorance as you are pleased to style it ? You forget that you are now talking of the daughter of the earl of Percy,—who is without exception, at this moment, the most lovely and accomplished young lady

I ever beheld. Would to heaven I had such a daughter as the sweet and interesting Theodora !

Miss Georgina was now completely silenced ; and lady Austincourt looked remarkably ill natured at Sir Mildred ; but she could do no more ; she dared not contradict his opinion respecting the merits of lady Theodora Percy : besides she had another motive for being completely dumb—she hoped one day or other to call Theodora the wife of her beloved Frederic ; and to have found fault with Theodora would have been bad policy. Miss Maryanne however, who for some cause or other was a much greater favorite with her father than her sister, and who had always envied the superior attractions of the little heiress, now exclaimed.

—“ Well I never beheld any creature in my life so ill cut out for a woman of title as Theodora ; say what you like papa, you cannot deny that,—and Miss Maryanne played with the deep lace that shaded, but by no means covered, her bosom.

“ What nonsense” cried Frederic, “ lady Theodora is a charming creature, you know she is ; and if you say much more Maryanne, I shall only suspect you of envy—remember that—you had better hold your tongue.”

“ You are a saucy jackanapes,” retorted Miss Maryanne and bit her lips ; while Sir Mildred enjoyed a hearty laugh not much to the satisfaction of lady Austincourt, who uttered with some asperity—“ Frederic my dear, I beg you will not be rude to your sister because your father has just now thought proper to be unnecessarily severe ;—as to lady Theodora, she is quite a child—a mere baby.—

“ She is the prettiest baby then I ever beheld in my

existence," cried Frederic, now almost laughing in his mother's face.—

"And everybody knows that on account of her very large fortune," continued lady Austincourt, "that she has been quite spoiled by the excessive indulgence of her father."

"Had I such a fortune, I am sure," cried Miss Maryanne, "that my papa should never spoil me."

"No my dear, I left that for your mother to do long ago," said Sir Mildred.

"You are insufferably rude," retorted lady Austincourt, "is not Sir Mildred now, my dear Miss Grandison?"

"Not for speaking a truth lady Austincourt," answered Miss Grandison, who added, notwithstanding Miss Maryanne's pouting looks, "and that is as plain a truth as ever I heard uttered."—

Miss Grandison then adopted her favorite plan of quietly taking the first candlestick she could find in her way and walking off to bed. While the Miss Austincourts almost expiring with fatigue, as they termed it, from the last stage; in which, they had travelled at a snail's gallop, wrapt up in scarlet pelisses lined with swan's down, in an elegant covered barouche, ordered white wine whey to be immediately prepared, with a bottle of hartshorn drops to keep them from fainting during the operation of undressing, before they resigned themselves to the arms of Morpheus.

"And I" cried lady Austincourt, "must positively go and lecture lady Theodora before I go to sleep, or she will forget her first lesson in the morning".— And her ladyship left the room, first kissing the cheek

of her darling Frederic, while she nodded a cold good night to the rest of the party.—“And I,” said Frederic mimicking his mother without ceremony, “must go with the groom to the stables and look at my Nancy, or she will forget her first lesson in the morning ;— and away went Frederic.

“Very pleasantly settled upon my soul,” cried Sir Mildred deliberately taking a pinch of snuff, “and now young gentlemen (turning to Adolphus and Edmund), what may your pleasure be before you go to sleep ?

“To wish you a very good night sir,” answered Adolphus and Edmund at the same moment.

Sir Mildred smiled.—“The very best thing I can do then,” said he, “will be to read an essay on the trial of patience”—And they all three repaired to their respective apartments.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

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It was soon after the family of Sir Mildred Austincourt had retired to rest, and long before the morning had begun to dawn, when Adolphus awoke with a sensation in his throat approaching nearly to suffocation ; and though he could not discern the slightest glimmering of light in his chamber, yet there was a smell of smoke and sulphur that seemed to issue from

the windows which overpowered him ; and throwing his clothes about him in the best manner he could, he removed the bars from the casement and beheld, to his utter terror and amazement, flames bursting from the interior part of the groom's chambers, which were immediately adjoining the magnificent stabling that Sir Mildred had lately built for the more easy accommodation of himself and friends during the term of the hunting season ; those which formerly belonged to the priory being stationed at too great a distance from the house. Adolphus had not one moment to reflect on the cause of this so sudden conflagration, for Edmund, who slept in a chamber adjoining to his, and who had been roused from his sleep with similar sensations to those of his cousin's, now called on his name in an agony of fright. Adolphus scrambled to him in the dark, and assisting him to throw on his clothes, after having awakened Frederic, they both proceeded together into the great hall, where with all the strength they could muster they rang the alarm bell, whose loud peal of terror instantaneously roused the domestics, and created fear and consternation in the breasts of the whole family.

Adolphus flew to the door of his uncle's chamber, assuring him that, the danger would be small if immediately attended to. Sir Mildred instantly arose, and giving every necessary order, hastened to sooth and calm the apprehensions of his wife and daughters, alternately bestowing his attention and care on them and lady Theodora. But lady Austincourt absolutely screamed with terror ; and Georgina and Maryanne who were huddled together in their night clothes, now crept to the bedchamber of their alarmed mother,



squalling, and clinging to her arms, which could ill support their weight.—“ Oh: where, where is my Frederic?” cried lady Austincourt, “cruel boy, not to come to his distracted mother.”—In this manner lady Austincourt continued to rave and talk, till Sir Mildred out of all patience exclaimed—“ Helen, I am ashamed of your weakness; what have you more to fear for Frederic than the rest of your children?”

Oh! Frederic is my darling, roared out lady Austincourt to the still greater displeasure of Sir Mildred, and he sarcastically observed,—

“ Your darling is gone then to try if he cannot save his favorite Nancy from the flames. You see Helen, he is more anxious for the preservation of his *blood mare*, than alarmed for the safety of the whole family.”

Sir Mildred had uttered facts. Frederic had jumped from his bed the moment he learned the catastrophe, and without considering that the life of a human being might be in danger, thought only what assistance he could render the firemen in the stable.

“ Zounds and the devil!” cried he, “ I would not lose Nancy for the best pack of hounds that Sir Mildred could give me! so work away my hearties; save Nancy, and let the bonfire blaze!”

The bonfire did blaze, till it reached a most alarming height; and, notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the firemen, it was rapidly approaching towards the east wing of the Priory, part of the groom’s chamber having already fallen in with a dreadful crash; and the general consternation which this occasioned became dreadful. The flames increasing each moment. The ringing of bells, the cries of the frightened females, and the terror that prevailed even in the

breasts of the firemen, rendered the Priory one mass of general confusion; and, for further safety, it was even now thought necessary to remove every valuable within the repository of the stone chapel, belonging to the Priory, in a long gallery of which chapel hung the rich and magnificent paintings of Sir Mildred's noble ancestors, which had been handed down from generation to generation, till they became the property of the present possessor. To this gallery was likewise added a spacious saloon fitted up in a gothic style, and to this saloon it was presently determined that the whole family should repair, as the most commodious and convenient place of safety; but scarcely had they all assembled in this consecrated spot, Sir Mildred Austincourt, lady Austincourt, her daughters, and two sons Frederic and Edmund, the former of whom rejoiced that he had succeeded in placing Nancy beyond the reach of danger. When every individual of the family and belonging to the Priory were present, and as they fancied in perfect security, Lady Theodora, who was stationed with Fanny Roseberry near one of the gothic windows, in pensive contemplation of the scene around her, uttered a sudden and piercing shriek! Adolphus flew towards her, and beheld from the windows the cause of her almost involuntary cry of horror. It was part of the east wing of the Priory enveloped in one complete blaze; and in the agitation of the spirits of Adolphus, he did not till this moment recollect that the apartments which Miss Grandison had occupied were situated in this quarter. The same reflection now darted across the mind of Theodora, and she exclaimed with an indescribable expression of mental agony, "Oh Miss

Grandison, dear good Miss Grandison, what will become of her? she will perish in the flames, I am sure she will! yonder is her chamber! Almighty Powers! will nobody fly to save her!"

"Oh, Miss Grandison!" was now repeated from every mouth.

"Oh Camilla Grandison," exclaimed Lady Austincourt, wringing her hands. "Dear Camilla Grandison, I shall never behold you more."

"I will give five hundred pounds reward," cried Sir Mildred, looking round to his numerous domestics that flocked together in the chapel, "to that brave fellow who will step forward in this hour of peril to save the life of that worthy woman!"

"And I would give all I am worth in the world; though I were left the poorest beggar," uttered the sweet and compassionate Theodora, sobbing as if her heart would break.

"My sweet miss and noble master the attempt would be useless," cried the boldest of the firemen. "If she has slept on any chamber of the east wing, I am sorry to say it is by this time pretty nigh demolished. I care not for life—a man can die but once; but to throw it away without any service is but poor work, as a body may say."

"God of heaven! must she then be left to perish," cried Sir Mildred, "amidst devouring flames, while her friends, the wretched spectators of her fate, dare not stretch forth a hand to save her?"

"Not for my soul's eternal peace will Adolphus Walsingham stand by and see Miss Grandison perish," cried Adolphus, rushing from the side of Lady Theodora, and presenting himself before his uncle.

"My life is indeed," he exclaimed, "of little value, but it would be less were it not now exerted in the cause of such goodness and humanity, uncle. I fly to save or perish with Miss Grandison!"

The scene faded before the sight of the Orphan Boy. It was in vain that Sir Mildred and his beloved Edmund cautioned him to desist; and while with one effort of determined resolution he flung from their outstretched arms, the next moment beheld him precipitated into the burning flames, that now threatened destruction on every side to all beneath its direful influence. Adolphus saw nothing, he heard nothing, save the agonized cry which had burst from the lips of Theodora; and he flew, unconscious of the scorching flames that every where opposed his entrance, and reached, in the midst of sulphur and of smoke, the staircase leading to the passage which communicated with the apartments of Miss Grandison; but, to his inexpressible agony and horror, found that he could proceed no further, as he expected instant annihilation, from the huge columns of smoke which encompassed him, and completely frustrating every effort that he then could make of saving the unfortunate victim of inevitable calamity. He uttered an exclamation of horror; his senses were bewildered; and hopelessly rushing from a spot which every moment promised death, he was preparing to retrace his way back, when a faint moan arrested his attention; it seemed to breathe the voice of an expiring sufferer; and though he could not distinguish from whence it proceeded, yet Adolphus judged it to be no other than the voice of poor Miss Grandison, who having crept from her chamber at the beginning of the fire, had

groped her way into some passage, fainted through terror, and was now expiring in the midst of this dreadful conflagration. Adolphus had not a moment to reflect on a thought so shockingly terrific, and which harrowed up his very soul ; for as he gave an involuntary motion with his right foot against the pannel of a door through which he was obliged to pass, his left rested on something which rolled beneath it. He stopped—he gasped for breath—he groped with his hands towards it—it was a human form that his hands encircled—it was Camilla Grandison !

“ Alive ! ” exclaimed Adolphus, “ Alive ! Oh ! if yet alive, Camilla Grandison, I may save thee ! ”

Adolphus knew not what he did ; he knew not what he uttered, only that he held Miss Grandison in his arms ; and as he bore her with the rapidity of lightning from the surrounding flames, he felt the pulsation of her heart beat against his, and his joy was too great for utterance. He heeded not the scorching heat which oppressed him, and was now nearly overpowering him ; nor parted with his charge till he resigned her to the arms of Sir Mildred and Lady Austincourt !

One shout of general acclamation and of joy burst from the lips of the surrounding spectators ; and though not insensible of the valuable gem that he had preserved at the hazard of his own existence, yet was Adolphus covered with confusion, when the oldest and most practiced of the firemen declared that he had achieved one of the most daring and perilous actions they ever remembered to have been done in the whole course of their experience, while tears of rapturous affection and congratulation chased each other down the face of the excellent Sir Mildred.

But it was impossible to describe the looks and actions of Miss Grandison, who opening her eyes in the moment of her recollection, fixed them on the countenance of the Orphan Boy with the expression of a seraph. She beckoned Adolphus towards her, as she reclined on the arm of Lady Austincourt, and while torrents of tears fell over her face, she took hold of his hand, she pressed it to her heart, but she was silent; a look more full of meaning than volumes could have spoken being directed towards him; and had a million of interpreters been present, they could not have conveyed to him more forcibly the sentiment of gratitude flowing from a soul like Camilla Grandison's.

Adolphus was now sitting between Sir Mildred and Edmund, suffering such intense pain from his right arm, which he apprehended was scorched by the flames, that the anguish was intolerable; but he knew not that it was discoverable in the expression of his countenance, till Theodora started from her seat; she addressed some words towards him, but she was so tremulous that he could not understand their meaning until she took off the white veil in which she had wrapped herself and approached Miss Grandison.

"Oh! dearest Madam," cried she, "that you are safe, and here amongst us, how I rejoice; but your preserver!"

The lips of Theodora faltered, she trembled, and her cheeks were covered with blushes of the deepest scarlet; all attention was now directed towards her with curious enquiry; but notwithstanding their looks she continued—

“ But your preserver, Madam, has not escaped unhurt.”

Lady Theodora said no more; she resumed her seat, threw her veil over her face, and while all now pressed around Adolphus to know what injury he had received, and what assistance could be offered, this feeling fascinating girl would not hazard another look towards the object of her compassionate solicitude.

“ She has done her duty,” said Adolphus to himself; “ the notice of which was common to humanity; what more ought Adolphus Walsingham to expect from the wealthy heiress of lord Percy? what more? why nothing,” cried Adolphus, answering himself the intrusive question.

Adolphus knew not how it was, however, that he was haunted on his pillow with the blush that had crimsoned Theodora’s cheek, and the lips which had asked assistance for the wounded arm. “ Ah,” thought he, “ if this fire lasts it will consume me. Time shall give a balsam to heal the wounded arm; but what can administer a balm to heal a wounded heart?”

## CHAPTER IX.

The morning after this eventful, and ever-to-be remembered, night; a night, which it is believed marked the destiny of the Orphan Boy for the space of many succeeding years, presented a scene of confusion and devastation not easily to be described: it could only be felt, and felt it was by the excellent Sir Mildred Austincourt, with the patience and fortitude of a christian and a man, though not with the stoicism of the philosopher. He could not behold the once magnificent and splendid mansion of his noble ancestors nearly levelled with the ground without evincing the most deep and heartfelt concern. All the household furniture, together with some of the finest horses which had been the most material sufferers by the fire, were completely destroyed. Likewise the most part of the rich and expensive ornaments and wearing apparel of the whole family: including the property of Miss Grandison, and the wardrobe of lady Theodora Percy.

The plate and jewels only were preserved: yet, though these were considerations highly consolatory to lady Austincourt and her daughters in the first moment of their composure, they began deeply to deplore the loss of their precious and most favorite ornaments, which had been so lately imported from the gay metropolis. Miss Maryanne however comforted herself with the reflection, and whispering in the ear of her sister observed that, their papa was rich enough to buy them more.—



“That he is my dearest loves,” repeated lady Austincourt in an ecstasy, “and you shall both have diamond crescents at the very next assembly.”

This sentence was pronounced so audibly that it reached the ear of Sir Mildred when the mutability of all human affairs wholly occupied his mind in the great and recent loss he had experienced; and never had lady Austincourt beheld him so angry with his daughters.—“Ridiculous girls,” uttered Sir Mildred, “and you, lady Austincourt, their more ridiculous mother, thus to encourage their preposterous vanity. You provoke me Helen: provoke me to speak unpleasing truths. Perish the empty baubles they have lost!—and with my own consent they never shall be replaced till they have learned to estimate the true value of all worldly riches—the inestimable treasure which lies in the possession of a feeling heart.”

This was a point on which lady Austincourt dared not dissent from the strict avowed principles of her husband; and she thought proper to vary the subject by adverting to lady Theodora.—“How fortunate my love,” cried she, “that only yesterday you should have consigned your jewels to my care—the invaluable casket which your father presented you with when you quitted Germany: I should have been inconsolable for their loss: would not you my sweet Theodora?”

“They were my mother’s, and for that reason were most precious to me,” replied Theodora, “but had I lost this jewel which I prize more than all the world, the loss would indeed have been to me irreparable.—So saying, lady Theodora unfastened the gold chain which was suspended from her lovely bosom and pre-

sented to lady Austincourt the portrait of her father.

“ It is excessively like his lordship,” said lady Austincourt, “ but positively not half so handsome. So really Theodora you would sooner have parted with your jewels than have suffered a separation from this little bit of ivory : well I protest that is saying a great deal : but you are a most eccentric girl,—is not she Miss Grandison ?

“ So eccentric that, I believe you will not find her fellow among the list of fashionable young ladies,” replied Miss Grandison, who glanced a look towards lady Theodora expressive of her warmest approbation ; while she threw one on Miss Georgina and Maryanne which by no means accorded with the present sensations of their crafty mother.

It was now uniformly agreed that the future residence of the Austincourt family should be at Wooburn Valley, a beautiful little estate, which at the demise of lady Georgina Austincourt had become the property of Sir Mildred, (this lady being his great aunt) even before he had attained the age of twenty-one ; and it had ever been the favorite retreat of his ancestors ; and was particularly endeared to Sir Mildred by its having also been the chosen place of retirement of his mother : in whose sequestered and tranquil shades, his beloved sister, the long lamented Isabella, was born. Wooburn Valley therefore possessed a magnetic influence over the feelings of Sir Mildred, and in this spot he determined to reside till the Priory could be got forward in a state of repair fit for the reception of the family ; and though lady Austincourt had strenuously opposed it, being much too solitary and remote from the metropolis, yet she could not carry her point ; and all the delights

of a second presentation, and the gay festivities of Cavendish Square were necessarily obliged to be delayed, to the complete chagrin and mortification of the Miss Austincourts.

In a few days after, they arrived at Wooburn Valley ; which indeed presented a scene of the most picturesque beauty, being seated at the declivity of a sloping hill whose sides were abundantly supplied with foliage of the most lively description; at the bottom of which ran a small lake, whose water appeared composed of the finest crystal ; and over which the variegated flowers of the blooming spring had already spread their softest lustre : nor did Adolphus ever forget the sensation that effected and nearly overpowered his feelings on his first beholding this enchanting and beloved retreat of his uncle's ancestors ; rendered so sacred to him by its being also the birth-place of his mother.

Ah ! thought Adolphus, as he rested his eyes on some beautiful ivy which crept round the body of an aged oak, here once did the youthful and lovely Isabella commune with her gentle thoughts ; graceful as the *églantine* that entwines yon bower, and sweet as the wild rose that grew beneath her hand. And an involuntary sigh that such a being no longer existed, sprung from his bosom at a moment when he thought he should have escaped from observation, but he found the eyes of his uncle were fixed upon him with an emotion of tenderness he did not attempt to conceal, while, as he leaned on his arm, in tremulous accents, he affectionately pronounced, “ dear boy ! in these shades lived and grew almost to womanhood your dear loved mother ; methinks in each soft whisper of the breeze I hear her gentle voice, and see her

aerial form in the shadow of these trees ! Yes Adolphus, Isabella was an angel, to whose resemblance of mental graces and personal loveliness, I cannot even now compare but one earthly female whom I have ever seen !”

“ Would to Heaven I could behold that woman who resembles my mother !” exclaimed Adolphus, with an energy he could not suppress. “ Ah ! with what sacred veneration should I approach her !”

“ It is well you had not said love,” cried Sir Mildred, looking at his nephew with keen penetration, for the woman I mean is no other than lady Theodora Percy !

It is impossible to describe the thrilling ecstasy which at this moment stole over the senses and throbbed at the heart of the Orphan Boy.

“ Indeed, Sir,” cried Adolphus, “ does lady Theodora so strongly resemble my mother ?”

“ So much so,” replied Sir Mildred, “ that when Theodora speaks I could almost believe it to be the voice of Isabella ; and the smile which dimples Theodora’s cheek, is the identical one of my gentle sister’s. You will doubtless therefore Adolphus,” continued Sir Mildred with an arch smile, “ feel a respect for lady Theodora, because—”

“ Sir Mildred stopped, for he had not till this moment appeared to be sensible of the expression of the countenance of the confused and trembling Adolphus, who unwilling to betray an emotion which language could not have been adequate to reveal, suddenly replied—

“ Oh ! yes Sir ! I shall always respect Lady Theodora, because—”

But poor Adolphus, for the soul of him, could not get another word out of his mouth, and he looked like a fool when his uncle uttered—

“Because what, Adolphus?”

“Because she so strongly resembles my mother, Sir,” said he, and wondering how this simple word should have so overwhelmed him with confusion as to cover his face with burning blushes, he escaped from Sir Mildred to avoid an explanation.

## CHAPTER X.

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That actions the most pure, and motives the most benevolent, may be perverted by the false constructions which others choose to place upon them, is a lamentable truth which it is impossible to deny; and Adolphus was doomed to find this observation truly verified in the conduct of Lady Austincourt and his cousins; Edmund, the noble hearted Edmund, alone excepted; in having been accessory to the preservation of one individual in the family, he had now fallen in the estimation of the whole, attributing his conduct to motives of self-interest, and to principles which his soul revolted at and his judgment condemned; nor was it till some days after his arrival at Wooburn Valley, that Adolphus was able to account for the increased coldness of Lady Austincourt towards him,

and the petulant display of ill-humour in his cousins, who on every occasion attempted to wound his feelings by sarcasms the most pointed and severe. Frederic was scarcely civil to him, and when a large party was expected to dinner at the Valley, for the express purpose of paying a farewell compliment to the son and heir, he took an opportunity of picking a quarrel with Adolphus in the most unhandsome and ungentlemanlike manner, to all of which he replied not a word till Frederic saluted him with the appellation of "beggary rival;" and then no longer able to endure such torrents of insolent prevarication, he indignantly exclaimed—

"Hold Mr. Austincourt! another word and you may repent of your petulance."

"What," retorted Frederic, "am I threatened, and by you?"

"Not so, Frederic," cried Adolphus. "You are well aware that I could not, would not fight you. The son of my uncle, the child of my benefactor is sacred to me; and I would as soon level a pistol at my own breast as at yours. But I am no coward, you know Frederic that I am not; it is therefore mean and unmanly of you to take advantage of my situation, and most ungenerous of you thus to wound my feelings. But pray," continued Adolphus, "what part of my conduct has drawn upon me your unmerited abuse? In what can Adolphus Walsingham be considered the rival of Mr. Frederic Austincourt?"

A blush of conscious reproof tinged the cheeks of Frederic as he replied—

Have you not lost me the interest of Miss Grandison? and do you not now, at this moment, stand forth

the insolent pretender to the hand and fortune of lady Theodora Percy?"

"Pretend to the hand and fortune of Lady Theodora Percy?" exclaimed Adolphus, while a tremulous agitation pervaded his whole frame. "Your insinuation is false, Sir, and your assertion without truth or justice. My conduct to Lady Theodora Percy has been uniformly such, as I would adopt to her whole sex, and with Miss Grandison perish the mercenary principles you have branded me with, in the which I did but the duty of a man. I saved Miss Grandison from consuming fire, but it was the interposition of Heaven alone that guided my hand: however, Sir, that worthy woman will acquit me that in the attempt I had no sinister design; and your own heart I am sure will Frederic, if that heart yet retains one spark of generosity or candour; and be assured that though I feel greatly wounded by your unjust suspicions, yet your petulance nor your rudeness shall neither tempt me to retaliate, nor your unkindness provoke me to lift my hand against the son of my benefactor."

With these words, which Adolphus had uttered with collected firmness, he left Frederic to his own reflections, and in a state of mind by no means enviable, entered his own apartment to make some alteration in his dress, as it was near the hour of dinner-time, and many of the expectant visitants had already arrived.

The windows of his chamber were so situated as to command a perspective view of the enchanting scenery that surrounded the valley, and as he contemplated with pensive enthusiasm nature's beautiful variety;

which was dispensed even to the humblest floweret of the shade, he involuntary sighed at the arrogance and ingratitude of man ; that, in no situation, though blessed with nature's bounteous gifts, will acknowledge himself satisfied with the lot in which his stars have placed him. And surely, thought Adolphus, there is a fatality in human nature which cannot soar above the mercenary views of this world, in which they have not power of remaining a moment longer than a superior destiny decrees, yet they carry on an existence in oppressing the oppressed, and wounding the feelings of the too nicely sensitive, when they unfortunately do not possess the gifts of bloated affluence.

As Adolphus ruminated on the conduct of Frederic Austincourt, he felt himself perplexed and embarrassed, as he could in no way account for his so sudden and unprecedented behaviour towards him. It is true that ever since the memorable night of the dreadful conflagration at the Priory, Miss Grandison had honoured him with the most distinguished marks of her regard and approbation, after testifying her unbounded gratitude, by shedding tears whenever she named him as the preserver of her life, which particular notice, and the further hints she threw out, that it was her intention to bequeath Adolphus Walsingham at her demise an independancy, served as fuel to the fire already raging in the bosom of Lady Austincourt, and for ever stamped that invincible dislike towards the poor Orphan Boy, which even in his infant years had failed to make any impression of kindness on her unrelenting disposition. Already did she behold in Adolphus the barrier to her long projected plan of possessing the whole



of the property of Miss Grandison ; and already was he considered by her ladyship the upstart mushroom that was to level her blossoms to the ground. For this accusation of offence, however unmerited, he could therefore in some measure account. But Lady Theodora Percy, exclaimed Adolphus, who dares to accuse me of having sinister designs on Lady Theodora ? what demon of revenge has conjured up this in the mind of Lady Austincourt and her family, that I should thus be loaded with opprobrium and contempt ? I aspire to the hand of Theodora ? Oh ! I am not so vain and so arrogant as to hope that I could possess a place in her remembrance.

Notwithstanding, however, the modesty of Adolphus, that he could be nothing in the estimation of Lady Theodora Percy, yet the thrilling recollection of his wounded arm having once been an object of attention to her, fascinated his senses, and stole on his imagination like the “ sweet south breathing from a bank of violets,” and he mournfully exclaimed—

“ Oh ! why should I hesitate to acknowledge that so enchanting a creature is worthy the homage and love of all mankind ! Yes, Theodora ! I too could worship, though I dare not pay my vows ; yet, wert thou the daughter of a peasant, humble and unportioned like myself, and Adolphus Walsingham the son of a monarch, proud should I be to share my glory and my wealth with thee, sweet maid !

During these reflections the object which had engaged the greatest part of them appeared, and from her dress Adolphus concluded she was only just returned from a morning’s ramble. She held a covered basket on her arm, the contents of which, she seemed

particularly anxious to hide from observation ; and with a lighter step than usual she tripped across the lawn, hardly seeming, from her gossamer movements, to crush the parti-coloured little daisy, and the yellow buttercup with which the grass had already become diversified. She was met at the end of the lawn by Frederic Austincourt who attempted to join her in conversation ; but saluting him with a cold and distant courtesy, she ran into the house.

Adolphus was ill-natured enough to feel a triumphant joy at an incident which could in no way concern him. But he was not master of his feelings, which the unexpected sight of the lovely and interesting Theodora had greatly tended to agitate ; and having taken up several volumes that lay scattered on the table, he at every opening page, could see, nor read nothing, but the name of Theodora. So, thought Adolphus, it is high time to shut the book : and with a countenance which could ill conceal the agitation of his mind, he prepared to enter the drawing room of his uncle, in which were assembled persons of the first rank, nobility, and fashion : and amongst others, soon after his entrance, Adolphus discovered the blooming daughters of Sir Robert Montgomery, whom he accosted with the most respectful enquiry after their health since he had last the pleasure of beholding them at the priory. Adolphus was answered by Miss Montgomery with that elegant good breeding which always distinguishes a gentlewoman ; and with her sister the lovely Julia, he soon entered into a conversation of the most rational and pleasing kind ; in which they were presently joined by Edmund Austincourt, who never appeared more lively, or animated ; and among many other topics

which were introduced, the dreadful catastrophe which had occurred at the Priory became the subject. By choice Adolphus would have remained wholly silent, till Miss Montgomery approached him, and tapping him on the shoulder, exclaimed,—“ And is it really true Mr. Walsingham what is reported of you? but first of all let me assure you, I am in no way inclined to doubt that you actually stepped forth in the midst of the fire regardless of your own danger to save Miss Grandison?

“ I do not think, Madam, replied Adolphus, in some embarrassment, as this speech had drawn the attention of the whole company, “ that it is in the power of any one human being to save the life of another. Miss Grandison’s life was in the peculiar care of Providence; there was no merit due to me, nor will I receive the praise which so justly belongs to another.”

“ Another?” exclaimed Miss Montgomery.

“ Yes, Madam, to Lady Theodora Percy,” cried Adolphus, “ whose entreaty to fly to the assistance of Miss Grandison was instinctively obeyed; and though true it is that I bore her in my arms to a place of safety, yet it was the voice of lady Theodora that warned us of her danger.”

Though Adolphus had not the least intention of gaining the smallest approbation by relating a simple fact, yet he was hailed on all sides, and in conjunction with Lady Theodora Percy, as the saviour of Miss Grandison, who called them her dear children in the midst of the whole assembly. And while Lady Austincourt in vain stifled a rage which every moment was growing stronger; and Frederic could scarcely conceal the envy of his disposition, Adolphus beheld with keen

regret, and a mortification he had never felt before, a more repellant coldness in the manners of lady Theodora than ever toward him, which he attributed to the privilege he had availed himself of, by having mentioned her name ; but however hurt and pained, as he felt himself at her conduct, yet he was neither humbled nor abashed, for the proud consciousness of having acted right supported him ; he therefore assumed a gaiety in his manner which seemed more to surprise than to affect her, and when the dancing of the evening commenced, he solicited the hand of the younger Miss Montgomery, which was granted to him with the most unaffected sweetness.

“ For the first and second set, and then,” cried she “ Mr. Walsingham you will have the goodness to resign me, for positively I am engaged after that for the remainder of the evening to *one partner*.”

As she said this Adolphus took her hand and led her to the ball-room, softly addressing her as he went.

“ And so I am to resign you, sweet Julia,” cried he, “ but pray who is my happy rival?”

“ One who has a prior claim to this fair hand, have not I Miss Julia?” softly ejaculated Edmund Austincourt, who instantly presented himself before them, and seizing the disengaged hand of Julia Montgomery, carried it to his lips with a warmth which he thought warranted more than the familiarity of a slight acquaintance, and which never having seen him do before, perfectly astonished and confounded Adolphus ; the more when, turning round to behold the effect which this little piece of gallantry had upon the lady, he perceived her cheek to be rained with blushes.

while her soft blue eyes expressed every sentiment but displeasure.

“So then” thought Adolphus “thou art caught Edmund in the trammels of the little blind deity ; but it is not Theodora that has led thee to the snare.”

What cause Adolphus had to be rejoiced at this discovery he knew not, but certain it is that his gaiety, which was before assumed, was now natural, and he entered into the spirit of the festive dance, not only with a conviction that Julia Montgomery was by his side, but with a consciousness that Edmund Austin-court was not the lover, as he once surmised, of Lady Theodora Percy.

## CHAPTER XI.

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When Adolphus resigned the hand of his fair partner to his cousin Edmund, he did not feel any of those sensations of regret or mortification which he should have experienced, had that hand been the hand of Theodora, for whom he was apprehensive he had conceived a sentiment that was likely to undermine that repose which had hitherto been sweet and tranquil as sleeping innocence, and the more distant that fortune had placed her above his hopes, the more tyrannic was the influence she possessed over his feelings. A thousand times, as her sylph-like form

floated across his imagination, did he wish that poverty had been the lot of this sweet maid. Ah ! then, thought Adolphus, Theodora thou wouldst have been my equal : poor, like myself, I would have aspired to the blessing of thy hand, and more proud than monarchs, would have hailed the treasure of thy love the greatest gift that Heaven could bestow !

Adolphus danced with some of the prettiest girls in the room, certainly whose charms to appearance far outshone Theodora, but as he rested his eyes on the ever varying countenance of the fascinating little heiress, he thought no human being ever half so fair ; yet fair Theodora was not ; but the intelligent sweetness that beamed in her dark eyes, expressed each sentiment of a soul which nature seemed to have created, when she was in a mind to please ; and no eye could behold her work without pleasure, no heart but throb convulsively at her touch.

Frederic had been the happy hero of the evening, and had obtained the hand of Theodora for every succeeding dance, but as the eyes of Adolphus cautiously glanced towards her, as Frederic triumphantly led her forth, he could clearly perceive that neither pleasure nor inclination reigned in her features, and that a cold listless ceremony, agreeable to the precise forms of fashionable etiquette, had alone induced her to give him her hand ; once too he caught her eyes straying towards his partner in the dance with an expression that thrilled to his very soul, for it was too much like the sentiment of a passion, without which *true love* never yet existed. Towards the conclusion of the last set she appeared so dispirited and fatigued by the exertions of the evening, that she even solicited per-

mission to retire. This entreaty Adolphus overheard in a whisper to lady Austincourt by the flighty Maryanne, who hursting into a horse laugh, added to her sweet mamma, in her usual strain—

“Do let the ridiculous gothic creature enjoy her own whims, Mamma, and then my brother Frederic will be at liberty to choose a partner more agreeable to his taste, for Theodora is really enough to give one a fit of the vapours; shall I go and tell her, Ma, that she may brush as soon as she pleases? and a good riddance to her I say.”

“Yes,” cried lady Austincourt peevishly, “but have a care child that you do not say any thing to offend her; you know she is an heiress, and is rich enough to portion out the whole family if she pleases.”

Miss Maryanne pouted, but could not advance a single word against so weighty an argument; she therefore approached Theodora with a sort of forced complacency, which seemed to say, I had much rather not be civil to you if I could in any way avoid it, so drawling out—

“Mamma says,” lady Theodora, “you may please yourself, but thinks it quite cruel of you to desert my brother in the middle of one of his most favourite dances, which is ‘*Arabella*,’ you know; yet I suppose, according to custom, *you must have your way*; and at the conclusion of this very polite and consolatory speech, Miss Maryanne tript off to the other side of the room, and Adolphus beheld lady Theodora a few minutes afterwards, accompanied by the eldest Miss Montgomery, disappear. Adolphus knew not by what fatality he was led, from the most irresistible impulse of curiosity to converse with Theodora, as he

conceived, for the last time, and he slowly followed her receding footsteps, till he heard her pronounce the kindest adieu to Miss Montgomery ; and then he stationed himself at the end of the avenue through which he knew she was obliged to pass, employed as it were in searching for something he had lost, which, in fact, might justly be estimated the truth. He had lost the treasure of a peaceful heart, and it could no where be found but in the possession of her who had unconsciously stolen it.

With a trepidation which nearly mastered his feelings, he heard the light step that announced her approach, but what was his surprise, his astonishment, and confusion, when he heard her pronounce " Adolphus Walsingham " in the most heaven-breathing accents. He would have given worlds at that moment to have become invisible ; but she soon observed him in the attitude of an attentive listener, and not giving him time to utter a single sentence, darted through the avenue with the rapidity of lightning !

" Good God ! thought Adolphus, woman is the strangest problem in existence, why did she pronounce my name at all ? or if with such emotion, why in one moment afterwards with such disdain avoid me ? "

Not being able to account for such caprice, Adolphus sought once more the gay scene he had quitted, the festivity of which no longer afforded him pleasure. In sight of Theodora his soul had bounded with elasticity, and he beheld without regret the entertainments of the evening conclude, and the gay assemblage of company depart in their respective carriages, without breathing the most latent wish or curiosity that they would ever bestow a thought on him ; or feeling the



smallest ambition to become a character in the fashionable school of notoriety.

As he retired to his own chamber; his mind dwelling painfully on the events of the day, he accidentally encountered Fanny Roseberry, who having seen the Miss Austincourts carefully disposed of in the arms of Morpheus, was quietly retreating to her own chamber, but seeing Adolphus she suddenly stopped, and curtsying respectfully, timidly enquired, if the day following was fixed for the departure of himself and his cousins from the valley?

As she made this enquiry with a degree of anxiety and a peculiar earnestness Adolphus was not prepared for, he immediately directed his eyes towards her, satisfying her in the point about which she seemed so solicitous; but he became transfixed to the spot to perceive that Fanny was nearly in a state of insensibility, a sudden expression of grief and horror crossing her countenance, while her quivering lips partook of the most ashy paleness!

“Good God, Miss Roseberry,” said Adolphus, attempting to support her, “you are exceedingly ill, what has thus alarmed and agitated you? let me run and procure you some assistance?”

“Assistance? not for the universe,” she feebly articulated, as her head rested on his shoulder, “you are very good Mr. Walsingham. But not for worlds must you bestow a thought on one so——so——so very wretched!”

She proceeded no farther! a flood of tears seasonably came to her relief, and at the very moment that Fanny was in the act of disengaging herself from the arms of Adolphus, which for a few moments had

wholly supported her; Frederic Austincourt rushed in between them.

“ Fanny here,” cried he, “ and you Adolphus Walsingham, at this late hour ? what can this mean ? but the meaning is plain, and I have only to apologize for being an intruder.

As Fanny at his approach instantly retreated, Adolphus found himself alone with Frederic, and as he hesitated not a moment to inform him of the cause which had reduced Fanny Roseberry to the situation in which he had beheld her, he was astonished to find his hand seized, not with the firm grasp, as he then expected, of a jealous madman, but to his utter astonishment and equal amazement, pressed with the genial warmth and affection of a friend !

## CHAPTER XII.

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Adolphus could not possibly define the expression which stole over the countenance of Frederic Austincourt at the departure of Fanny Roseberry : much less was he able to account for the warm pressure of that hand he had so lately thought it contamination to touch : but he was ever of a forgiving nature, and more happy to be reconciled to one whom he considered bound to him by the ties of nature, than to be at vari-

ance with him. When Frederic therefore requested that he would sacrifice an hour's repose and retire with him to his own chamber, having something, as he said, to communicate of a most particular nature, in the which he could very materially serve him by his advice and condolence, he did not hesitate to comply ; though it was not without some surprise that he perceived he cautiously barred and double locked the door on his entrance to his apartment, and then having seated himself exactly opposite to Adolphus, he began the following discourse, which he delivered in a strain that, at once spoke a penitence sincere ; and he felt himself compassionated towards him when, bursting into tears, he confessed himself to be a villian :— the worst of villians ! greatly shocked and agitated by language so little expected, Adolphus conjured him to explain himself : when he instantly dropped on his knees, from which position he would not move till he unguardedly drew from him a solemn and sacred promise that, neither laws human, nor divine, should compel him to betray the confidence he was about to repose in him.—

“ Swear, Walsingham,” cried he earnestly, “ swear.”

“ By the honor of a man,” replied Adolphus.

“ That is not sufficient,” cried the agitated Frederic, “ you must swear by your soul's eternal happiness,” and he seized the hand of Adolphus with a wildness that alarmed and distressed him while he emphatically pronounced,—“ By my soul's eternal happiness I swear never to reveal your secret :—be calm I conjure you dearest Frederic and explain this mystery.”

“ It is for you,” cried he “ to be calm, who have never been guilty of the crime, the commission of

which, while it stamps me the most hardened villain in existence, haunts my pillow, with the bitterest remorse, and leaves me the most miserable wretch in creation !

“ Oh ! Walsingham ! you are not the seducer of female innocence ;—you are not the destroyer of a beauteous, fond, confiding girl !—but that villain am I.”

“ Almighty Powers ! forbid,” cried Adolphus, while cold drops of perspiration covered his face.

“ It is even so, my cousin,” rejoined Frederic, “ the honor of Fanny Roseberry has fallen a victim to my licentious passion.”—

Accustomed as Adolphus had been from a child to the well-known gallantry of Frederic’s disposition, he had not an idea that he carried it beyond a certain boundary ; but to find him confessing himself guilty of a crime, which he conceived to be the most heinous in human nature, so completely shocked and overpowered his feeling that, he remained for many minutes incapable of uttering a single sentence either of censure, or condolence. At length mustering up all the resolution he was able, he addressed him in the following words :—

“ Frederic, let those only without faults condemn ; it is not my business to pain your present feelings by the additional pangs of reproach ; all I have to do in this unhappy and most unfortunate affair is, to offer you that advice which is the only necessary duty of a true and sincere friend ; and which, were you the brother of my heart, I should wish you speedily to follow :—need I tell you there is now but one act of your whole life that can in any way atone for the

cruelty you have practised, or be offered as a reparation due to the unhappy girl you have betrayed."

"Name it," cried Frederic, "instantly tell me what reparation you can intend,—what atonement you can make,—and if the one half of my fortune, I will cheerfully dispence with it to poor Fanny."

"Since I have not spoken so clearly as sufficiently to be understood," replied Adolphus, "in my mind there is no reparation can be made to the woman whose spotless honor a man has contaminated but the *one* : in plain terms, you have seduced Fanny Roseberry: and in plain terms, you ought to marry Fanny Roseberry."

Frederic recoiled a few paces from the place where he was sitting.

"I marry Fanny Roseberry," uttered he, "why surely cousin Walsingham thou art now bereft of thy senses:—I, Frederic Austincourt, the heir apparent of an ancient family, the son of a baronet marry the daughter of one of my tenants!"

"Frederic," answered Adolphus, "you should have considered that; and recollected that you were the son of a baronet, or the heir apparent to an ancient and honorable family before you betrayed the daughter of one of your tenants: nor in my opinion has the commission of that act any thing to do with your being the son of a baronet: unless, like many other noblemens' sons, it is your pride to disgrace the armorial bearings which your ancestors have worn without a blush."

With these concluding words Adolphus would have bade Frederic good night, but he intreated that he would not just then leave him to his own unhappy reflections; assuring him, that he would consider on

the terms he had proposed for the happiness of the injured Fanny, whom he declared that he still passionately loved.—“That is,” cried he, assuming a gayer tone, “*for what she is you know* : but when I think of Theodora, the divine Theodora——

On the subject of lady Theodora Percy, the lips of Adolphus were sealed in silence : and Frederic not caring that he should express sentiments on a point so delicately tender, suffered him to withdraw : which he was the more willing to do from an oppression at his heart which he felt insupportable ; for notwithstanding the contrition with which Frederic had at first disclosed the nature of his offence, he afterwards discovered a levity by no means according with true penitence : and he had extorted from him a vow of so binding a nature, and so sacred a principle, that no man of honor under any circumstances whatever was at liberty to reveal, the issue of which he trembled to think of. For that Frederic would never marry the injured Fanny he was well convinced : but that he should now dare to think himself worthy of the hand of lady Theodora, appeared to Adolphus an affront of which he thought no man capable after departing from the fixed rule of honor and integrity that exists to bind us to the soul of the gentle being it is our duty to protect. Alas ! thought Adolphus, how many not content with transgressing such sacred laws, boast of the triumph they have obtained over the victims of their seduction : and more than ever he compassionated the situation of Fanny Roseberry. The tears, the agonizing tears that would be shed by her aged father and mother, whose grey hairs she would bring with sorrow to the grave. Hapless Fanny ! thought Adolphus, wert thou the

only victim of man's deception, thy fall would be a just example for thy credulity: but thousands like thee perish at the false shrine of his idolâtry. And he concluded his reflections by thinking that, there was no woman so virtuous, nor any man so wise, as can hope through the labyrinth of life to pluck the rose without being goaded by its wounding thorn.

Frederic contrived from the influence he held over the feelings of his mother still to postpone the long projected journey to Cambridge; so that when the chaise appeared at six in the morning to convey them hence, it was countermanded by an order superior to any who dared to contradict its authority. The family party therefore met as usual at the breakfast table, but not with that accustomed cheerfulness as they were wont to do. Frederic was grave even to pensiveness, which was remarked by his mother with a degree of uneasiness she could not conceal; and Sir Mildred was out of humour at being foolishly opposed in a point wherein he thought himself decidedly right. Lady Theodora seemed uneasy about something nobody could find out; but which Adolphus would have given worlds to know: and the Miss Austincourts, from the too great exertions of the evening, had not chosen to come from their apartments. So that Edmund and Miss Grandison were the only two beings who could be exempt from the general run of ill humour. As to poor Adolphus, his mind was so abstracted and his spirits so shocked by the last night's discovery, that he could think of nothing but poor Fanny Roseberry; and how matters might be brought about with her and Frederic.

But while Sir Mildred was engaged in looking over

the papers which had been just brought in, lady Austincourt suddenly recollected that she had formed a party to dine at Sir Robert Montgomery's, with which the Miss Austincourts were not previously acquainted. She thought it most prudent therefore to apprize them of it, and now rang the bell for Fanny Roseberry to come and receive her message; which not being immediately answered, she broke out with a violence that was not expected by the servants who waited in readiness to obey her ladyship's commands.—

“Some of you go I desire of you,” cried she, and know the reason why Fanny Roseberry dares to have the insolence to neglect her duty. Tell her to come this moment as I bid her, or I will make her repent her behaviour.”

“This imperious command no mortal could resist; and two of the footmen were instantly despatched in quest of the offender; and as Adolphus beheld Frederic sitting very uneasy on his chair, he dreaded the sight of this unfortunate girl coming into the room, not knowing exactly whether he was doing right or wrong, but in the truest compassion towards the feelings of others he ventured to say that, “he supposed—he rather believed that, not the omission of her duty, but indisposition prevented Miss Roseberry from appearing before her ladyship; and in that case hoped that her first offence might be excused.”

While he uttered this, the eyes of Theodora were riveted on him with a mixture of disdain, and while an indignant blush dyed her cheeks with crimson, she turned away to conceal an emotion of resentment of which she appeared ashamed, but of which his heart assured him that she had no cause. Adolphus had



now, however, innocently drawn upon him the sarcasm of the offended Lady Austincourt, who darting on him a look of one of the three furies, tauntingly exclaimed, "Miss Roseberry forsooth ! and pray Mr. Walsingham how long have you been acquainted with my daughter's abigail, as to know whether she is ill or well ? such terms of intimacy with creatures of her calling, are in my opinion extremely unbecoming and highly indecent in any young gentleman in the family of Sir Mildred, who indeed is highly blameable by admitting such imprudent liberties to take place under his roof."

"Sir Mildred, perfectly astonished at hearing such an harangue, delivered in a tone of the bitterest irony, and so utterly confounded by such an unmerited attack as absolutely to be struck dumb with amazement, withdrew his eyes from the paragraph he was reading, and with surprize depicted in every feature demanded—

"Pray Helen to whom are you speaking ? for your language is altogether so unintelligible, that it requires an interpreter to understand what you really do mean ?"

"It requires no interpreter but the blushes of your guilty nephew there !" retorted lady Austincourt, fixing her eyes on the embarrassed countenance of Adolphus with the expression of a fiend."

"Guilty nephew !" muttered Sir Mildred. It is the first time in my life I ever heard that Adolphus Walsingham was pronounced guilty, and you will excuse me, lady Austincourt, if I positively declare that I must have more substantial proofs of his being so, than merely what your own words have alluded to. How comes it, Sir," cried he, turning to Adolphus

with an eye of inquisitive earnestness, "that you are here accused of some impropriety of conduct and have not the courage to defend yourself?"

"Because the accusation is false," instantly replied Adolphus, "and a consciousness of innocence needs no defence. I call Heaven to witness that no one action of my hitherto harmless life ever breathed a thought to injure mortal; much less am I capable of cherishing a sentiment that would disgrace the nephew of Sir Mildred Austincourt?"

"I will give you credit for your assertion," replied Sir Mildred here in the face of the whole family. "Lady Austincourt you are wrong, and I condemn such harsh sentiments where you have no just grounds to warrant such suspicions: what, in the name of common sense, has my nephew to do with Fanny Roseberry? or Fanny Roseberry to do with him. I beg lady Austincourt you will not in future interrupt my moments of employment with chimeras of your own imagination; it is really very disagreeable."

So saying, Sir Mildred resumed his occupation without further molestation, Lady Austincourt remaining in sullen silence at the same moment as Adolphus then thought of exchanging looks with her son Frederic, which by no means promised a flag of truce.

While things were precisely in this order, Adolphus stole a look at the enchanting Theodora, and perceived, from under the most beautiful dark eye lashes in the world, that a tear had unconsciously strayed beyond the boundary she intended, and wetted a cheek pure as new fallen snow. But to what cause he could attribute the sweet exhalation he knew not. Could it

be from sympathy, from friendship, from pity, or from love? A tear is not shed without cause, thought Adolphus, and the heart is the fountain from whence it flows. But Adolphus was not left long to contemplations so pleasing; nor was it long intended that he should enjoy the triumphant feeling which possessed every faculty of his soul, in being thought worthy in the opinion of those he so dearly prized; and if an evil genius presides over the destiny of man in one eventful moment of his life, to dash the cup of happiness from his lips, that destiny was the poor Orphan Boy's; for the servant who had been despatched for Fanny, returned with tidings that she was no where to be found, and that the housekeeper having long suspected that all was not right with her, had examined every part of her chamber where she had slept, and concealed under the pillow of her bed, had discovered a letter addressed to Sir Mildred Austincourt; and while symptoms of curiosity were strongly blended in the countenance of each individual present, Sir Mildred read aloud the letter of Fanny Roseberry, contained in the following artless appeal to the feelings of humanity:—

## CHAPTER XIII.

“ Oh ! my dear honoured and respected master, twice has this letter been blotted with my tears before I could gain courage to address you or unfold my sufferings ; and though already certain that I must be beyond enquiry when this shall reach your hand, yet the shocking confession I am going to make, stamps the burning blush of shame upon my cheek, and causes the pen to fall from my trembling hand ! Oh ! Sir Mildred, in what words can I speak my shame ? or acknowledge to you and my honoured lady, that the once happy and innocent Fanny Roseberry, has dishonoured and disgraced your respectable roof, and is now become a lost, abandoned, guilty, miserable creature ! seduced by, I dare not utter his name ; I have sworn never to reveal it ; sworn it even to my betrayer ! that it shall rest in silence, for the sake of the noble family he has indeed disgraced, by the ruin of a simple girl so much below his station. I love my seducer, who has heaped sorrow on my head ; I love him still, and shall never curse his memory. Tell him Sir that the unhappy Fanny Roseberry will die in murmuring blessings on his name, and that in fulfilling her last request he will in part atone the wrongs of a too credulous girl. My poor father ! my poor mother ! Oh ! Sir Mildred ! does not your heart guess at my meaning ? I would say more, but my brain is on fire ! yes one word more—tell my cruel betrayer to extend his kindness

to the murdered peace of my parents, though he has destroyed their

FANNY.

"If there is indeed a crime beyond the reach of pardon in the catalogue of human errors," vociferated Sir Mildred, "it is the crime of seduction," as he closed the letter of Fanny Roseberry with one hand, while he clenched the other in an agony of the fiercest rage; he then sternly fixed his eyes expressive of abhorrence on the embarrassed countenance of Frederick! for in spite of all his arts to conceal his sensations, he exhibited a confusion too perceptible to escape observation; while lady Austincourt as perceptibly discovered an agitation which shook her whole frame, but in which concern for the unfortunate Fanny had not the smallest share! No, the crafty mother trembled for the *guilty son*! That idolized son, exposed for the first time in his life to the authority of a father's severe and just reproof; a father too whose high sense of honour taught him to respect laws, human and divine so sacredly, that the commission of the crime in question stood foremost in his estimation as the blackest and most sinful. Lady Austincourt, therefore perceiving the axe ready to fall, determined that it should not fall on the *guilty* but the *innocent head*, whom she intended that the blow should crush for ever. It was not the son but the nephew she doomed to destruction, and not giving Sir Mildred a moment's time to consider who was or who was not the object of his resentment, she levelled her attack on Adolphus in the following manner:—

"So Mr. Walsingham," cried she, "you have

achieved a most noble deed, and rewarded your uncle most graciously for his kindness and attention; yes, I guessed as much; I surmised all this; did I not always tell you, my dear Sir Mildred, that Fanny Roseberry would bring some disgrace on the Austincourt family? did I not always say that such pretty faced girls were dangerous objects? but indeed Mr. Walsingham it is a shocking affair, for until this young woman's fatal *attachment to you* I must needs own that her conduct was at all times irreproachable."

Having delivered this speech with incredible volubility, she paused to take breath, and to judge what effect her envenomed dart had on the feelings of her auditors.

"My honour, my life, on the faith of my cousin Walsingham," exclaimed Edmund; "your ladyship is under a mistake the most erroneous and execrable! Adolphus Walsingham cannot be the seducer of Fanny Roseberry, who has been guilty of a double crime, in my humble opinion, by having artfully, and I must say treacherously, concealed the name of her betrayer. Why not to me as well as to Adolphus may not the same charge be applied? I too have slept under the same roof with this deluded girl! I too have acknowledged the personal loveliness of Fanny Roseberry! You too, Mr. Frederic Austincourt, have not been *idle* in her praise. But when did the lips of Adolphus ever pronounce her name? When was my cousin Adolphus ever seen conversing with Fanny Roseberry? while you Frederic——Oh! shame! shame! that thus the innocent should be confounded with the guilty," cried Edmund, throwing himself into a chair, and almost gasping for breath, while the fury of his incensed mother knew no bounds.

"And would you dare, thou audacious stripling," uttered she, "accuse your brother of a crime so odious?"

Edmund made no reply, already satisfied in his own mind who was the betrayer of Fanny Roseberry.

While Miss Grandison, who had lost no time in adopting the same sentiment, indignantly uttered, casting a look at the same moment of most contemptuous disdain towards the silent, confused, and guilty Frederic.

"And why not, pray lady Austincourt? why should your son Frederic be exempt from the general charge more than his cousin or his brother? Is it because he is the elder that you extend such unlimited charity? If *that* is your motive, there is no respect to age in this particular—he was old enough to know better; and as to the silly girl, I confess that I am much inclined to adopt Edmund's sentiments—it is not only both cruel and unjust to conceal the name of her seducer; but it is wicked at the same moment, as it confounds innocence with guilt, and slanders those who do not merit the foul accusation. As to that poor Orphan Boy, I would venture my life a second time to be preserved by him; and while I suppress sentiments that might be offensive to all parties, yet I decidedly and firmly pronounce, that I do not think Adolphus Walsingham the seducer of Fanny Roseberry.

"Suspend your judgment, Madam," cried Sir Mildred, more sternly than ever he had yet spoken. "Suspend your judgment, I entreat, till a more explanatory conversation has taken place, and which must clearly exonerate my nephew from such a charge, or establish him in my mind as the greatest monster in existence."

"Oh God ! unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, however dark or mysterious, stand now forth either to defend the innocent or to punish the guilty son of Isabella, child of a beloved sister ! poor orphan committed to my tenderest care, and nephew of my affections, answer now once and for all to the dreadful charge against you. If you are guilty, the concealment is a second commission of a crime so odious ; if innocent, face your accusers ; let truth be the herald of your tongue, and the upright consciousness of your own heart will be your stoutest shield to preserve you from the malice of your enemies."

The feelings of Adolphus, which had only been suppressed from mental agony, and a conviction that the deadly blow aimed by the hand of Lady Austincourt, would prove a mortal wound to all his earthly happiness, no longer struggled to give utterance to his thoughts, and sinking on his knees before Sir Mildred, he implored him to hear him, trusting that though Frederic would not criminate himself, he would still have principle sufficient to exonerate him from a charge so black, of which he knew him to be wholly innocent, and he exclaimed—

"O best and worthiest of uncles, if the most sacred and solemn asseverations of my innocence be not enough to justify my conduct in your opinion, before heaven I appeal to one to witness the truth of my assertion, that I am not the seducer of Fanny Roseberry ; he can attest my innocence ; he can swear it ; he can prove it."

"Let this ostensible witness instantly be called then," cried Sir Mildred, "let him come before me."



"He is before you!" repeated Adolphus, and restrained by his oath, not even by a look to betray the author of his now complicated misery, he trusted wholly to his generosity, but he trusted in vain; Frederic remained silent, while in heart-rending accents he repeated, "he is before you."

"This is mere evasion," cried Sir Mildred, "a fabricated tale to hide a crime of the blackest dye. If there is one capable of proving your innocence, why does he shrink from a confession that must exonerate you, and cannot dishonour him? why does his tongue refuse to utter the unerring dictates of truth and justice?"

"Because he is a villain!" exclaimed Adolphus, darting for the first time a look expressive of his wounded feelings at Frederic, who, situated as he then found himself, chose not to return the glance of contempt he threw towards him.

"I am hurt," cried Sir Mildred, "grieved to the heart to find such shocking depravity lodged somewhere in the bosom of a family, the lives of whose ancestors were never yet tainted with dishonor: and though Adolphus Walsingham in this dreadful business has confessed himself not to be a principal, and that he is not the betrayer of this unfortunate girl, it is evident he is by some means acquainted with the knowledge of who is; therefore do I hold him culpable in the concealment of a crime the author of which should be brought to light. If therefore, I again repeat, you know the seducer of Fanny Rosberry, I expect sir that you will instantly divulge his name."

Not a muscle moved in the face of Frederic as Adolphus solemnly pronounced.—"It is my compli-

cated grief and shame to confess that, I am bound by an oath never to reveal his name:—my oath is sacred, I never will.”

“Then sir,” cried Sir Mildred, “I shall consider you as accessory in his guilt;—the wicked agent of his proceedings. And in being privy to so diabolical an affair, you have for ever forfeited all claim to my good opinion.”

“Retract a sentence so severe for pity’s sake my honored father,” exclaimed Edmund, on whose arm Adolphus now leaned for support, overpowered by the excess of his feelings.

“Never,” vociferated Sir Mildred rising from his chair, “my resolution is taken; plead not Edmund for one who, no longer worthy of my esteem, is unworthy of yours. Adolphus Walsingham either discovers to me the assassin who has murdered the peace of an innocent girl, or he quits my house to-morrow morning.”

“Then is my doom eternally fixed,” cried Adolphus, “my life is of little value, but while a spark of life remains, its expiring embers shall be honor.”

“Sir,” answered Sir Mildred, “there can be no honor in the business—how dare you talk of honor—a villain should be brought to light, and you have the audacity to conceal him.”

“Sir Mildred Austincourt,” exclaimed Miss Grandison, now catching hold of the skirts of Sir Mildred’s coat as he was going precipitately out of the room. “Sir Mildred Austincourt,” cried she, “hear me! hear Camilla Grandison.”

“Well, Madam, that I will do with pleasure,” said Sir Mildred, “what may you please to advance?”

“Miss Grandison, the kind tender hearted Miss

Grandison, now burst into tears, "that poor boy is innocent," uttered she sobbing, "and if I have any foresight in this affair, that boy is not only innocent, but altogether praiseworthy: if he has made a vow, surely you would not have him revoke that vow: recall then the harsh sentence you have passed, and receive him to your arms I beseech you."

"Yes madam, cried Sir Mildred, gently repelling her, "when that boy has performed his duty, and disclosed the name of the villain. When he can thus exonerate himself, these arms shall again receive him: but, till then—never! no by heaven! till that moment arrives, the sentence I have passed is—irrevocable!

"I am shocked beyond conception," cried the tender lady Austincourt, as she applied a bottle of salts to her delicate nose.

"I am distressed beyond expression," exclaimed the compassionate Miss Grandison, while she placed her hand on that of Adolphus, cold as the icy fangs of death; a convulsive shuddering seized his whole frame; and when he beheld lady Theodora's countenance, though it expressed all the softness of a pitying angel, at the same moment that she threw a glance of mingled reproach and resentment towards him, Adolphus felt that the climax of his humiliation was complete. He perceived not the departure of Sir Mildred, or that lady Austincourt and her idol Frederic had quitted the room. He heard not the soothing voice of Camilla Grandison; nor the affectionate accents of his beloved Edmund. He beheld but one object in the whole created world before him, and that was lady Theodora Percy! In another moment he should behold her no longer; in another

hour his eyes would be closed on her for ever. There was madness in the thought ; and just at the moment that she was retiring, he sprang from the arms of Edmund and caught the folds of her robe; he had not the temerity to touch her hand:—" For Heaven's sake lady Theodora," exclaimed he, " depart not with a conviction that I am a wretch unworthy to hold a place in your chaste thoughts! Time will elucidate a mystery which now hangs over me ;—time must alone prove, eventually prove, that Adolphus Walsingham is not a villain !"

The cheeks of Theodora on being thus suddenly addressed became flushed with crimson ; nor could she hide an emotion which pervaded every lovely feature as, bursting into tears, she instantly closed the door after her ; while in enraptured and transported accents Adolphus exclaimed—" Theodora loves me"—and sunk motionless in the arms of Edmund Austincourt.

## CHAPTER XIV.

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For nearly two hours Adolphus remained in a state of insensibility ; during which he had been conveyed to his chamber, where he was receiving the most affectionate attention from the kind-hearted Edmund : and while he soothed him with assurances of his regard, which, the suspicions thrown on his character had

neither the power to lessen, nor the contempt he was treated with could any way diminish, he at the same time exhorted him to patience, perseverance, and fortitude, virtues which are the leading characteristics of Christianity.

“ I will not probe your generous heart my beloved cousin,” cried Edmund, “ by urging you to a confession in which your honor is so materially concerned as to demand inviolable secrecy, because I feel well convinced, could honor permit a disclosure of your sentiments, I should be the first to share in your confidence.”

“ Oh ! most avowedly so,” exclaimed Adolphus, and, Frederic, the detestable Frederic, was ready to burst from his lips, when Edmund, as if he already discriminated his thoughts,—“ Let us now,” cried he, “ discuss this subject no further ; suffice it to say that, retribution comes in an hour when least expected. But you must forgive my father, Adolphus, he is hasty and passionate, but the warmth of his generous nature is unabated in the cause of justice and humanity:—like the rays of the refulgent sun, he is sometimes too powerful ; but none are suffered to scorch beneath his beams.”

Adolphus was tranquillized by the conversation of Edmund ; he saw in him the god-like temper of man before he is corrupted by the vicious habits of worldly sophistry ; and he then imagined that, he would one day shine in the pulpit, a just follower, and a meek disciple, of the blessed faith ; and pressing his hand against a heart which now throbbed with convulsive agitation, he begged him to retire and leave him to compose himself ; to which he willingly assented ;

promising that, in a few hours, he would visit him again, and endeavour to obtain some consolatory message from Sir Mildred. He smiled; but it was a smile in which the heart had no connection; and as Adolphus attentively watched the receding footsteps of his beloved cousin from his apartment, he felt that, in a few moments, his struggles would be at an end; and he determined to quit the house of his uncle as soon as possible, and to wander "God knows whither." For, to remain under the imputation of guilt—to be no longer thought worthy of an asylum under his respectable roof—and to be deemed culpable in any shape by him, he found insupportable. He started from the recumbent posture in which he had been sitting; and by thus rousing to action each dormant faculty of his soul (the cure alone of hopeless grief), he resolved on the hazardous project of setting out, as soon as the shades of evening began to fall; and to depart for ever from the protector, whom he still so greatly revered, that, to offend him, or seem to offend him, had been a sacrilege of all he held dear; and now proved a mortal stab to all his prospects of future happiness.—"No, my best and dearest uncle," thought Adolphus, "the poor, deserted being whom you have fostered from infancy, the 'Orphan Boy,' shall meet you with honor, or never more salute your presence!—No, never till the son absolves me from my oath, shall the disgraced nephew enter again the mansion of a displeased benefactor."—

Adolphus concluded his reflections with a positive resolution to put in practice the scheme he had formed: and shuddered to think that any of heaven's created beings should be guilty of the depravity of Frederic

Austincourt ; attributing, if possible, a greater share of culpability to his detestable mother ; whom, he now suspected, had long known of the connexion between her son and Fanny Roseberry ; whose youth, innocence, and beauty were now, by one destructive blow, blasted for ever ; and whose hapless credulity he pitied more than condemned.—“ Thus lovely women fall,” said Adolphus, “ but not like the leaves of autumn ; a second spring shall restore their primitive beauty, or shall revive their native bloom : but, when women fall, no second spring shall e’er be theirs again.

When the dinner bell rang to assemble the family, Adolphus pleaded indisposition as an excuse to be absent from table ; the agitation of his spirits not permitting him even to partake of a slight refreshment in his own apartment ; and he busied himself in making arrangements for his departure, which he determined should be at the close of the evening. He therefore packed up a change of linen ; disdaining to carry away any more with him than what common necessities required. For now he considered he had no longer a right to the rich and handsome wardrobe which had hitherto been provided for him. Of pocket-money Sir Mildred had indeed been so liberal that, on examining the state of his finances, he found he had at least in his possession the sum of eighteen guineas ; which he thought would amply satisfy the expences of a journey were it even to the antipodes : so little did he then calculate on worldly wants, or worldly advantages. He knew that there was a village distant from the Priory about five miles ; and from thence he determined to proceed on his way to St. Alban’s ; at which place resided the family of

a Mr. Morrison, a respectable tradesman ; whose son had long been a schoolfellow with himself and cousins under the instruction of the Rev. Mr. Richards of Wellington Lodge.

Leonard Morrison being of his own age, he had contracted a particular intimacy with ; and more than once during the vacation had been invited to the house ; which invitation, though he had never availed himself of, he still gratefully remembered,—“ Mr. Morrison is a tradesman,” thought he, “ and has acquired popularity by the honesty of his dealings and the integrity of his principles :—what more of man is required, even in the most exalted station, than the performance of his duty,—and find me on the whole surface of the globe a more respectable character, or one more useful to society, than an honest tradesman ! ”—

The clock had responded the hour of six before Adolphus was interrupted in his meditations ; and the sound vibrated on his heart as the knell of departed happiness. He thought of Theodora, and the little probability there was of his ever beholding her again. But he thought of her only as a celestial angel ; or as one of those bright meteors, at which, though the eye is permitted to gaze, in the next passing minute is suddenly lost to us for ever.

Never had the moon shone with such resplendent beauty as now that the Orphan Boy beheld her from the windows of his apartment ; and a thousand tender recollections rushed upon his memory of the many instances in which his beloved uncle had evinced towards him a particular regard : that uncle, from whom he was now voluntarily going, never to return, but with honor pure and uncontaminated by the



slightest suspicion—when his innocence, clear and spotless from the breath of slander, would re-establish him in his good opinion, and doubly convince him of the unshaken rectitude of his character, and the firm integrity of his principles !

In these reflections he was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of Edmund to his apartment ; he was pale and agitated ; having had a long conference with his father and mother respecting the future destiny of his unfortunate cousin. Not a doubt remained on their minds but that Adolphus was in a great measure implicated in the disgrace of Fanny Roseberry and her infamous betrayer ; and that he could never more be received into the family without such a doubt being clearly removed was he feared but too probable.

“ The parents of Fanny,” said Edmund, were nearly deprived of their senses on hearing the first intelligence of her elopement ; and that as all inquiries to trace out the fugitive had been ineffectual, great apprehensions were formed that, in a fit of hopeless despondency she had destroyed that existence which the consciousness of error had rendered a burthen to her. You will likewise be surprised when I tell you, that my brother has already set out for Cambridge ; he took his departure not an hour since ; alleging for his so sudden resolution that, the present state of the family infected him with the blue devils ; a sort of complaint with which Frederic is seldom troubled. For my own part, my dear Walsingham, I cannot help forming conjectures which I will not reveal even to yourself. In the mean time, on what plan have you purposed ? I must necessarily join my brother in a few days. Will you speak to my father on the subject of your

future arrangement, or will you be pleased to appoint me your ambassador on the occasion? in which rest assured I will do my best to serve you"—Edmund paused for a moment, and then added with a sigh,—“With my mother, alas! I possess no influence.”

“Name not your mother for the love of heaven!” repeated Adolphus with an emphasis so strong that he could not recall himself; but the deep mantling blush which crimsoned the cheek of Edmund convinced him that the expression with which he had uttered this sentence was not lost upon him. He intreated that he would not continue a conversation so painful to them both, and promised him that in the morning he would be more collected: and with this assurance the generous youth left him to a repose it was never more destined that he should partake of under a roof he was resolved to quit when the family were all retired to rest. And on his bidding his cousin Edmund good night he wrung his hand with an agony he could not suppress.—“Edmund,” cried he “brother of my heart, best and truest friend, farewell!—when *next we meet* Walsingham shall not blush to face his accusers.”

A tear stood glittering in the mildest and most beautiful blue eyes in existence as Edmund affectionately returned his embrace;—“When next we do meet my dearest cousin,” answered he, “all shall be well again.”

Adolphus had now not a moment to lose; his signal was the sound of the last supper bell; and when every domestic was absent from the hall, he snatched up his little bundle, and unclosing the grand portal, gained the extremity of the park without interruption.

On leaving a beloved spot there is not a simple floweret of the shade, not a single-blade of grass, that is not doubly endeared to our recollection, and engraven on our hearts. And Adolphus felt a desire to look back once more at the elm trees which shaded Theodora's apartment that was irresistible ; for though the celestial being that inhabited it was no where to be seen or heard, yet he breathed a fervent prayer, that the white-winged seraph who guards unsullied innocence and truth would shield and protect her.—“ Farewell sweet Theodora,” exclaimed he, “ loveliest maid, farewell.\*”

As he quickened his pace at the conclusion of these words, he was somewhat impeded in his progress, and no less astonished, by the sudden appearance of a little terrier which belonged to lady Theodora running towards him ; it panted for breath ; rolled at his feet ; and when he hailed it by the name of Sambo, the faithful little animal licked his hand, and testified the most lively symptoms of joy.—“ I know not on what errand thou comest to me dumb interpreter of truth and sincerity,” cried Adolphus, snatching it up in his arms, “ but welcome art thou, thrice welcome Sambo to the heart of Walsingham, because thou art the first theft of love.”—So saying, he hastened with his little companion till he reached the turnpike road ; making no other inquiry at the turnpike, than merely to know if he was on his right way to St. Albans.

“ Right as your leg, young man” was the quaint reply that he received as he directed his course to the village where he intended to procure a lodging for the night ; and as he looked at his dumb companion, and

perceived with what cheerful alacrity he pursued his steps, he felt that he was not quite an isolated being.

Adolphus was by no means superstitious, yet he thought there was a fate which hung on trifles light as air; and that for some particular purpose this little animal had been ordained to be the companion of his journey. He found the present state of his feelings rather tranquillized by this reflection. And when, by the light of the moon, he perceived he was at the declivity of a hill, in the next moment he discovered at the foot of it a neat little brick house, with a clean painted sign of a Red Cow; which simply and civilly invited each passing traveller to walk in and partake of its humble fare. And as Adolphus approached nearer to this little dwelling, he perceived the host standing at the door giving orders to water some horses; and there was an air of good humour and humility about him, that made the Orphan Boy instantly enter into conversation with him respecting an accommodation for the night; and he immediately replied,—“ I have kept the Red Cow these six and thirty years Sir, and, God be thanked, never yet had a miss word with any of my customers; so if your honor will please to walk in, dame and I will do our best to make you comfortable. Though, as ill luck would have it, the shew folks have just come in to take up their quarters; so I hope your honor won't take any offence, seeing as how we have but one room to accommodate the company.”

“ By no means,” replied Adolphus, as he followed his host into a comfortable kitchen, hung round with huge sides of fat bacon; in the midst of which was a fire large enough to have roasted an ox; and round which were sitting a group of figures so motly and

comic in their appearance, so conceited in their gestures, and so every way at ease with themselves and every body about them that, Adolphus concluded, they were what his host had informed him, the shew folks. And he was no sooner seated by the fire with Sambo at his feet, and a small jug of ale before him, than a fine girl about sixteen years of age, whose indelicate attire by no means accorded with an air of modesty which was expressed in her countenance, offered, for the amusement of the company at large, to exhibit one of her most celebrated hornpipes; for which she would require no more than a few half-pence from each person, or a double allowance of Old Tom (which was English gin) for her father and mother, who were the master and mistress of the whole troop, consisting of about ten in number; the principal of which were female dancers, and male tumblers.

“Will you demean yourself sir,” cried the father of the girl as he led her by the hand and placed her on a square piece of board in the middle of the kitchen; “will you demean yourself by seeing a little of our harmless sports:—mean no offence upon my honor,” continued he, on seeing that Adolphus stared with astonishment, “but all trades must live; and why not a shewman as well as the rest of mankind? I have been a shewman your honor these five and thirty years come next Christmas, and no man can say that black is the white of your eye: can they master Phillipot?”

As this was addressed to the landlord, who was warming his hands by the fire, he instantly replied:—

“It be true enough indeed master Brazen you pays your reckoning, cannot say but you do; and though you gets your living in a rummish sort of way,

as a body may say, there is no roguery in it; and that's more than one half of the lords in the nation can say, who ride in their carriages."

"That's true, by the living jingo," replied Mrs. Brazen, "only there's a difference; look, ye master Phillpot, my spousey and I rides in our own carriage; while there's many fine gentry rides in their creditors."

A loud laugh from the whole company testified their approbation of Mrs. Brazen's keen remark; who, calling for a pint more of Old Tom, handed a glass of it over to her fair daughter, with,—<sup>a</sup> "Why the devil Betsy do'nt you begin."

The signal was soon made by manager Brazen; to whose proposition of his daughter's performance Adolphus had made not the slightest objection; but rather cheerfully assented; and Miss Betsy, to the accompaniment of a tolerable good band, went through the paces of a hornpipe with a spirit and grace which was by no means despicable. At the end of which she was loudly encored, to the great satisfaction of all parties, and the complete triumph of her papa and mama.

"There ladies and gentlemen," cried he, "behold what it is to be born a genus; did you ever see such capers? There's agility for you! And now if you please ladies and gentlemen, Mr. and Mrs. Squeak, who are the first singers in my company, will give you a duet quite in the Hopra style. I always likes to shew off the abilities of my first rate performers. Mr. and Mrs. Squeak great favorites I assure you. Always lets the cat out of the bag whenever any thing goes wrong and their manager's out of the way. Nice

people Mr. and Mrs. Squeak. 'Twas but the other night they caught one of my principal performers stealing away some bits of candles; and another in the very fact of—what does your honor suppose?

“Upon my word sir I am unable to guess,” replied Adolphus, with much difficulty suppressing a laugh he could scarcely keep in.

“Why sir,” answered he, “stripping, actually stripping off the breeches—the small clothes, I should have said ladies and gentlemen, of the grand emperor Bonaparte.”—

A young country farmer who had hitherto been silent, now rose from his seat, and putting himself in a boxing attitude, broke out in the following terms:—Strip off his breeches! dang me, if I had him here, I'd strip off his coat and waistcoat too!—let me but catch him, that'll be all! zounds! what a deadly drubbing I'd gie him at the plough's tail!—

A burst of applause would have followed this observation of the young farmer had not an old nettlesome frenchman, who was the leader of the band in manager Brazen's company, thought proper to reprove and dissent from the general opinion, by saluting the farmer with the appellation of, “You be von English pig;” to which the other civilly retorted, “English pig! you old French frog! I'll pig you if you give me any of your outlandish gibberidge, I promise you! I'll let you know what English roast beef is, you skinny old scarecrow, I wool!”

“Come Mr. Mounseer what-d'ye-call'em,” cried Mr. Brazen, “let's come to order wie ye. I do n't like words at any time; and it's not very purlite, I must needs tell you, to fall out before the ladies. Come

Mrs. Squeak, strike up! Mr. Mounseer thingamy, I always forgets your name, come strike up to Mr. and Mrs. Squeak's duet to the tune of "Punch drowns all care," and let me have no more of your French lingo I beg of you: come Mr. and Mrs. Squeak begin.

In the chimney corner scarcely visible from being of a remarkable diminutive size, sat Mr. Squeak; and beside him, a female of so gigantic an appearance, that Adolphus concluded she must originally have descended from the Brobdinags.—"Billy," cried she to her caro sposa (who actually trembled at the sound of her voice), "Billy Squeak, why do'nt you do as I bid you."

I always makes a practice of obeying you lovey," answered Mr. Squeak, "so pray master Phillpot bring my deary some bread and cheese and plenty of onions."

"By all means," answered the attentive host;" and Mrs. Squeak having gobbled up what would reasonably have supplied two ploughmen for their supper, condescended to warble forth, in tones, not very remarkably sweet, or melodious, the popular air of, "Love has eyes;" at the conclusion of which, Adolphus called his host aside, and slipping into his hands a pound note, begged that he would present it to the manager and his company for the amusement they had afforded them. He then made a voluntary exit from a scene by no means congenial with his feelings at the present juncture, however entertained he might have been at any other,—and why not entertained, thought Adolphus.

As he laid his head on his pillow, he could not suppress a smile at the scene he had just witnessed; it making the old adage probable enough that, "one half of the world does not know how the other half lives."



## CHAPTER XV.

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Accustomed as Adolphus had been to sleep on beds of down in the splendid and magnificent mansion of Sir Mildred Austincourt, and habituated, as it were, to all the luxuries that attend the appendages of rank and fashion, he did not ungratefully murmur, nor uselessly repine, at the deprivation of those pleasures, nor the loss of that grandeur, which he was no longer destined to share. Humble happiness sweetened with the smile of contentment was the station for which he exclusively sighed; and such, he conceived, could only be found in the bosom of honest industry, and virtuous attachment. He slept soundly in the clean and comfortable bed provided for him by the hostess of the Red Cow; and when he made his appearance in the stone-kitchen, his breakfast was already in preparation; smoking tea, hot buttered rolls, and plenty of fresh cream; to which, not only himself, but Sambo did ample justice: it was a sort of breakfast he was perfectly familiar with; and when Adolphus recollected that it was often administered to him by the hand of lady Theodora, he gave him a double portion of what he liked best.

“Well honest Phillpot,” cried he, on his host bidding him good morning, and hoping that he had rested well, “what have you done with your jolly companions the merry Shew Folks?”

“O your honor,” he replied, “they never stay here above one night. They sat off at day break, bag and

baggage, girls, boys, men, women, jack asses, and fiddlers; a set of happy devils; never low spirited; for if they cannot raise their spirits they are sure to raise their wits, and that is the way they get on."

"And no bad way either," answered Adolphus, "when a man has nothing but his wits to live on."

In which opinion Mr. Phillpot having concurred, and Sambo and himself concluded their repast, Adolphus discharged his reckoning; and with many compliments and good wishes from his host and hostess, again pursued his journey; and reached in safety the pleasant town of St. Albans at an early hour in the evening of the same day. He preferred going to an inn to alter his dress and take some refreshment to making an abrupt appearance at Mr. Morrison's; with whose family, excepting himself and his friend Leonard, he was not acquainted. Having rested himself for two hours, he prepared to enquire out the residence of his friend: which he was not long in doing, for "Leonard Morrison and Co. Wholesale Tea Dealers," stared him full in the face on his turning the corner of a street which gave a complete view of a large and spacious shop, adjoining to which appeared a very handsome and respectable dwelling house; and having knocked at the door, he soon gained admittance. On his sending up his name, Mr. Morrison himself came down to receive him; which he did in the most friendly and polite manner. "My dear boy," cried he, "I vow and protest you are almost grown out of my knowledge since I saw you at Wellington Lodge; notwithstanding which, I feel flattered that time, ever on the wing, has not erased from your recollection your old school-fellow and playmate little Led Morrison, who will be

rejoiced to see you." With these words Mr. Morrison taking Adolphus cordially by the hand, ushered him into a neat little parlour, and introduced him to his wife and two daughters. They were lovely girls; and the modest neatness of their dress accorded with the simplicity of their manners; and they welcomed Adolphus, as the friend of their brother, without ceremony, or affectation.

"Go Mary," cried Mr. Morrison, addressing his youngest daughter, "and apprise your brother of Mr. Walsingham's arrival:—you will find him in the counting house. Led is pretty steady for his age Mr. Walsingham; but we cannot expect that old heads will grow on young shoulders. The thing is quite unreasonable. So I never think of it when Led has a mind to be a little frolicsome."

"I always found Leonard Morrison sensible of his duty," answered Adolphus.

On which the old gentleman smiled, and observed, "Tis an excellent thing to have a friend at court," at the same instant that Leonard flew into the room and gave Adolphus such a hearty embrace and warm welcome, that he felt assured their early friendship was not forgotten. "Dearest Walsingham," cried he, "this is the most unexpected happiness you can imagine. How frequently have I talked of you to my mother and sisters. Have not I Mary? Have not I Harriet? Have not I mother?"—And again the generous youth pressed Adolphus to his bosom with affectionate ardour. In a short time, encouraged by the presence of Leonard, Adolphus became familiar with his amiable family; and perceived with no small degree of satisfaction that Sambo was likely to become a favorite;

being placed in the lap of Miss Morrison; who bestowed on him the fondest caresses.

Ah! friendship!—thought Adolphus—thou art a gem of such pure ray, that thou art never known in the gay moments of thoughtless pleasure! thy intrinsic value can only be estimated when the dark hour of adversity is gathering round the head of the devoted sufferer.

Adolphus imparted his sorrows and the nature of his situation to the sympathizing breast of Leonard Morrison; concealing only that part of his little history which he was bound not to reveal. At the conclusion of which he grasped his hand while he exclaimed,—“ By my soul Walsingham this is a most lamentable story; and I am glad thou hast stumbled on the block of Miss—fortune: because, hadst thou been fortunate and successful, I could not have served thee. But now thou art poor and miserable, thou shalt never want a penny, while Leonard Morrison has the command of a shilling! And, by the by, Walsingham, I must now tell you a little bit of history of my own. Father has somehow taken it into his head that, if I go abroad, I shall make my fortune better than by staying in England to marry a little wench that I am grown devilishly fond of; but as father do’nt seem to relish matrimony, and I have no mind to take Rachel for a mistress, why, egad, what do you think?

“ I cannot precisely tell,” replied Adolphus, admiring the candid sentiments of his young impassioned friend.

“ Why,” continued Leonard, “ I am going off to the West Indies in the character of an English merchant; and there if I prosper, and success crowns my

hopes, I'll come back and marry Rachel in spite of their teeth. Now Walsingham, what say you? I have more than enough to provide for my own wants, and a little to spare; and if I choose to give that little to a friend, what's that to any one!

"I would not impoverish you for the wealth of worlds Leonard," cried Adolphus, "though my heart bounds at your generous proposal; and I own the offer is transporting to one in my circumstances; yet your father——

"Is a friend to the fatherless," repeated Leonard; and wishing him a good night's repose, they suspended all further conversation on this subject till the ensuing morning.

Adolphus knew not what conversation had taken place between the father and son relative to his situation; but he found his friend Leonard not likely to be opposed in his wish of making him the companion of his voyage to the West Indies, for Mr. Morrison, calling him into the counting house the very next morning addressed him in the following terms:—

"Mr. Walsingham, I shall be exceedingly happy to have half an hour's conversation with you: I cannot spare more time; for I am a man of business: I am a tradesman, and keep a shop; and if that shop is not minded, why it is very likely there would be no shop at all. Leonard has briefly informed me of the little fireside story that is blown about in the Austincourt family; and it is very clear to me Mr. Walsingham, you will excuse me, I must speak my mind, it is perfectly clear to me that, Mr. Frederic Austincourt is the betrayer of the unfortunate girl Fanny Roseberry. Nevertheless young man, I commend your principles,

for having acted with integrity; and I do not see how you could have revealed the secret with which you were intrusted without entirely sacrificing them; for oaths are binding though made to a villain. With respect to Sir Mildred, though I know him to be a most excellent character, and a rigid moralist, yet in this affair I think, he has carried his morality too far. For doing your duty according to the principles of your religion, he has sentenced you to a trial which ought only to have been the punishment of the crime itself. However, my young friend, we will discuss this matter no further: let the parties concerned answer for their conduct at some future day:—in the mean time, I am so far satisfied with the part you have acted that, I do not scruple to select you as the companion of my son till his return from his intended expedition to the West Indies. And a greater task is assigned you; I shall appoint you his guardian during the time you shall remain with him; for I suppose Led has told you of a sort of foolish attachment he has got for Rachel Summerville; but I have put a spoke into that wheel; and for this reason, the girl has nothing but beauty to recommend her; so I am told, for I never saw her. All very well to be sure, a pretty girl may do under the rose; there is no denying it: but a man, Mr. Walsingham, must have something more substantial when he takes a fireside companion for his journey through life.”—

Adolphus smiled, but not chusing to hazard an opinion on a subject so delicately tender as the attachment of his friend, remained silent.

“What,” cried Mr. Morrison, “you wo’nt blab I see! Leonard has told you all: but you are wise

enough to hold your tongue about it. So let's adjourn to dinner in our little parlour, my wife has made some nice apple dumplings, and I am very fond of them."

The end of this speech concluded the conversation between Adolphus and Mr. Morrison; and if ever the poor Orphan Boy was vain, it was the approbation of this upright, honest, and industrious tradesman that gratified his vanity; and from this period, he became an inmate of this hospitable family: experiencing such kindness and attention as he never found in the bosom of those relatives to whom he was bound by the ties of nature. He divided his time, according to the best of his judgment, in partaking of rational amusements with Leonard, and rendering what little assistance he was capable of in the counting house of Mr. Morrison; and thought himself happy when every Sunday came round in escorting the Miss Morrises to church. And whenever he conversed with these lovely and amiable girls, he compared his present tranquil feelings with those agitated and unfortunate ones he experienced in the splendid and fashionable family of Sir Mildred Austincourt.—And, ah, reflected Adolphus, how swiftly time passes when a certain uniformity guides every minute of our lives. The mind then feels no vacuum. All is supplied by useful occupation. While dissipation flies to the haunts of giddy passion; and seeks in vain to find that bird of peace, whose downy wings can only rest on the bosom of social happiness.

While preparations for Leonard's expedition were making by Mr. and Mrs. Morrison, and even the day appointed when he was to accompany his son to Liverpool, from which place he was to embark on

board a fine well built West Indianman bound for Jamaica, Adolphus candidly informed the old gentleman of the state of his finances and the scantiness of his wardrobe ; giving him his motives for his not wishing to increase it when he left the house of his uncle. —“ I will not hear a word more on the subject,” uttered Mr. Morrison, and immediately walked into the counting house. But the next day, Adolphus was presented with a bill for fifty pounds, payable at sight, by one of his clerks ; which so overwhelmed him with gratitude, that he shed tears when he informed Leonard of his father’s unexampled generosity. And Mrs. Morrison had now the goodness to provide all such necessary apparel as he stood in need of. But notwithstanding the mind of Adolphus was most happily (to use a mariner’s phrase) “ under easy sail,” he could not, as the day approached for his departure, divest himself of an indescribable pang at the idea of quitting, perhaps for ever, the country that gave him birth. And although he endeavoured to chase away the tear that had intruded itself on this reflection, yet his uncle was still inexpressibly dear to his forlorn heart ; and Theodora was still the object of his most tender remembrance :—she was more ; she was idolized : and as her beauteous form floated across his imagination, and the fascinating sweetness of her voice vibrated on his ear, he fondly exclaimed—“ Yes, Theodora, when the ocean divides us, we shall indeed be separated ; but dear, enchanting, maid, no power can separate you from my heart ! there you will hold a place till time is seen and heard no more ! And should a watery grave bury the remains of your devoted Walsingham, thy form hovering over me like a celestial spirit, shall



descend with me to the depthless sea; and waft me to the regions of eternal happiness !

Adolphus was alone in Leonard's chamber unconscious of being overheard when he uttered this with all the ardour of the most impassioned tenderness, when, to his great embarrassment, he perceived the youngest Miss Morrison with her work-basket stationed so directly near the window, which was open, that he concluded she must have heard every word he had so incautiously uttered.

There was a softness and delicacy in the manners of this young lady which greatly added to her personal loveliness; and frequently when Adolphus had caught himself admiring the downcast modesty of her sweet blue eyes, he had thought that, had he never beheld lady Theodora, his heart would irresistibly have been won by the charms of Mary Morrison. But the chain bound by faithful love cannot be broken; it may be weakened, or depressed, but never broken! Determined however, in compliance with the wishes of this most amiable family, to appear perfectly sensible of the happiness which they had conferred on him, he mustered up all the spirits he was master of, and seemed at the supper table of Mr. Morrison, the gayest of the throng. Not so the lovely Mary: the roses on this evening had deserted her fair cheek—a pensive melancholy shaded her features—and in a low and tremulous voice she answered the tender enquiries made to her by her brother.

“ Mary, dearest girl,” cried Leonard, as he kissed her cheek, “ are you not well my love? I never saw you look so pale before. Yet you were merry enough two hours ago in the garden you know, when I was

telling you and Harriet that, on my return home to England, I should bring a rich West India Nabob apiece for you. And do'nt you remember how you laughed and said, ' If ever I marry Leonard, it wo'nt be for the sake of riches I promise you!' did not she Harriet?

" That she did," answered Miss Morrison, " and more than that Mary you said, but I wo'nt tell."

This innocent rally of the good humoured brother and sister was for some cause or other too much for the dejected Mary; she burst into tears; and to the astonishment of Mr. and Mrs. Morrison, her brother and Adolphus, hid her face in her sister's bosom and sobbed aloud.

Had a thunderbolt from heaven dropped on the devoted head of the Orphan Boy, he could not have felt more arrested by the blow, than by this delicate proof of genuine sensibility in the gentle heart of Mary. He calculated exactly on the time, when alone in Leonard's apartment, that he had breathed forth the name of Theodora in such rapturous exclamations: and though he wished not to recall the truths he had uttered in the sincerity of his heart, yet it revealed a secret, the knowledge of which gave him indescribable anguish—Mary Morrison cherished love for him; and it was impossible for him ever to love Mary Morrison! And more than ever did he deplore that destiny which had brought him into the bosom of a respectable family only to invade its repose.

" The sensibility of Mary can easily be accounted for," cried Leonard, as he raised her drooping head from the bosom of her surprised sister, " she is already anticipating the parting adieu with her good for nothing

brother; who deserves to be horsewhipped for giving her a moment's pain."

The whole family concurring in Leonard's opinion, Mary with deep mantling blushes overspreading her beautiful countenance, recovered so far as to drink a glass of wine which was administered to her by the hand of her father; and retired in a few minutes afterwards with her sister.

Mr. and Mrs. Morrison endeavoured to assume an air of composure, but in vain; Mary was their darling, and they could not bear to see her unhappy. The spirit of the evening was damped; its hilarity checked; not even the smiles of the lively Leonard could dispel the frozen gloom. And when Adolphus pressed the hand of Mr. Morrison as he bade him good night, he inwardly felt that he deserved to be arraigned at the bar a criminal, without having been guilty of any intentional offence.

## CHAPTER XVI.

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Mary Morrison appeared on the day intended for the departure of Leonard and Adolphus with a countenance serene as spring-tide flowers; a calm composure pervaded each lovely feature, and gave her the appearance of a celestial being. Nor could Adolphus

sufficiently admire that greatness of mind, and innate modesty, which the resignation of a hopeless passion that could meet no return so powerfully evinced. And he was now impatient for the moment when his absence would effectually restore the sweet maid to that peace, which he had unconsciously invaded.

The social little parlour of Mr. Morrison was crowded with farewell visitants, who would insist on shaking hands with Leonard before he quitted St. Albans: and the chaise having been ordered to the door, Adolphus handed Mr. Morrison into it; and tore Leonard from the arms of his weeping mother and sisters; being too much effected himself to trust his voice with a parting adieu.

"Pull up the glasses," uttered Mr. Morrison in a hasty tone, and as if wishing to get the better of his emotion, which the fond father could not conceal; and his orders were instantly obeyed; for the postillion setting spurs to his horses, they drove off at full speed from the town of St. Albans. As they proceeded on their journey, Leonard recovered his spirits; and Mr. Morrison was himself too merry a companion to be long under the influence of sadness. He both laughed, talked, sung, and repeated many pleasant anecdotes calculated to enliven them; and in this sort of disposition they arrived at Liverpool; and the next day went on board the *Felix*, a fine ship, well manned, in excellent condition, and properly conducted by Captain Parker; who received them without ceremony, with much good humour and social kindness.

We will not comment upon the parting which took place between Leonard and his father; being such as stamped an indelible impression on the mind of the

**Orphan Boy.** We shall only repeat his farewell words as he stepped into the boat which was to convey him on shore :—"Leonard," cried he, "let your conduct be such when absent from home, as to meet the smile of welcome at your return. And remember, that, from generation to generation, your ancestors have been born humble, the sons of honest industry; whose names have never yet been tainted with dishonour! Farewell, Led! hold this in your remembrance; let no false pride induce you to behave ill to your inferiors—retain a sense of humility about you—and the blessing and the care of Almighty Providence direct you always!"—

Leonard bowed his head in submission to his father's benediction; the boat pushed off; and the wind blowing directly favorable to their wishes, they weighed anchor in less than two hours from the land of Great Britain; and continued their course for the space of several days with every prospect before them of a safe, speedy, and pleasant voyage.

Who has ever yet contemplated the wide expanse of ocean but with emotion!—either our hearts are divided with love, or fear—some dear tie from which we are sundered—some tender throb, unseen, unknown, or felt by others, but that we ourselves are truly conscious of when our little bark is launched into the bosom of the boundless sea, with no traces of the far distant land to meet the welcome eye. Ah! then should fond remembrance of long cherished objects steal upon the mind, or the awful voice of conscience whisper that we have been unkind, this is a moment when reflection visits us, as with compunction, and pity drops not the unavailing tear. The heart is

softened—our spirit is subdued,—and when we behold the small space which divides us from the great eternity, we perceive the insignificance of worldly pride, and the vain impotence of all mortal power.

No such contentious visitings of conscience, however, filled the heart of the poor Orphan Boy; for his was the breast of unsullied innocence, which never yet had shamed the lovely semblance that it wore. And as he watched in silence over the waves, that sometimes dashed in sullen anger, and at another, only gently agitated the burthen which it bore, he sketched from the power of his poetic fancy the following lines addressed to the sea-boy, whose figure, was at that moment exactly before him, in the employment of some marine duty on board the *Felix*

### THE SEA BOY.

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Rock'd by the roaring waters, on the deep  
The Sea-Boy rough reclines, in gentle sleep,  
Unconscious of the wave,  
Which soon may plunge him with impetuous foam,  
Far, far from parents, friends, and much lov'd home,  
Into a wat'ry grave.

Ragged and torn—health decks his chubby face;  
And makes him cheerful mid'st a jovial race  
Of messmates, kind and free:—  
He whistles when the ship glides smooth along;  
Or on the midnight watch, he tunes his song  
Of youthful jollity.

The following lines were written by the Author on a voyage to Scotland.

But now his longing eyes descry the shore,  
Where, from his mother's arms, he last was tore :—  
He thinks, 't was hard to part :—  
The vessel's moor'd ;—he drops a joyful tear ;  
And fondly clasps again that mother dear  
With transport to his heart.

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Leonard and Adolphus being the only passengers on board the *Felix*, they enjoyed the society of Captain Parker with real pleasure ; who furnished them with many particulars of the commercial business of a country to which they were both entire strangers ; and for which they were greatly indebted. When the weather was fine they took slight sketches of the beautiful and magnificent views which, the nearer they approached the Western Isles, became more awfully grand and picturesque. And one evening as Adolphus sat in close conversation with Leonard in the Captain's cabin, where they were regaling themselves over some excellent punch which, he assured them, was the produce of some of the finest West India islands, a loud and piercing shriek, which seemed to issue from the interior part of the ship, assailed their ears ; and immediately a wrangling among the sailors became general. It was in vain that the captain demanded to know the cause of such disturbance : no one seemed anxious to answer his inquiries : until further and stricter investigation taking place, a sailor on the mid-watch was heard to exclaim—" That it was all along of little Ben having purloined a bottle of rum from one of the men on the pretence of giving it to his comrade who lay sick in the same birth with him :"—and as theft in a ship's company was in no way to be tolerated, from

whatever cause it proceeded, little Ben was sentenced to the accustomed punishment, as soon as his captain should fully be made acquainted with the nature of his offence. On hearing which the boy actually screamed with terror; and was down on his knees to solicit pardon and forgiveness when they heard the out-cry.

"Confine him in the hold till to-morrow morning," cried the captain, "when he shall be punished accordingly; but to night I desire that no one presumes to interfere with him." •

This being done, Captain Parker returned to his pipe and his grog: and in perfect good humour related the cause of quarrel with the men.—"The little scoundrel shall have a sound drubbing for these tricks," added he, "or he may chance to transgress again in the same manner. I know not how it is however that he should have been guilty of an offence so flagrant: I have always had occasion to like the boy for his good behaviour: he is very quiet, very diligent, and ~~very~~ sober; added to which, he is one of the handsomest little fellows I ever beheld in my life. He came to me without friends, or apparently any protection; and I took him on board from motives of compassion."

"Poor little fellow! (cried Adolphus) I could almost find it in my heart to plead for him; the motive being humanity which led him to steal the rum, not for himself, but to alleviate, as he conceived, the sufferings of a sick companion."

"It is not the motive, but the act, for which he must be tried," answered Captain Parker, "and were I inclined to pardon him, it would be setting a bad example to the rest of my ship's company."

As Adolphus could not gainsay so just a remark;



he despaired of obtaining a mandate<sup>1</sup> of pardon for the little culprit; yet he was determined to be on deck time enough the next morning to witness his examination.

All the seamen on board the *Felix*, except those who were actively employed, were ordered to attend the moment they heard the eight o'clock bell ring, to be special witnesses against the conduct of little Ben; a title he had acquired from his being of extreme small stature. And Adolphus no less anxious than the rest to hear what he should say for himself, left Leonard to his repose, and stationed himself on the deck. In a few minutes the captain appeared, and all were in readiness to receive him; and the signal being made to bring up little Ben, he made his appearance with both his hands confined with a rope, and a large fur cap that almost concealed his face; which being removed by order of Captain Parker, exhibited a countenance of such uncommon beauty and innocence that, Adolphus could not help looking at him with increased pity and commiseration.

"How came you little Ben," demanded the captain sternly surveying him, "to be guilty of the crime you are here charged with? Do you not know that taking a bottle of rum, no matter for what purpose it was designed, is felony—and that you are no more, and no less, than a thief? Are you not ashamed of yourself?"

Immediately the boy replied, and without the least embarrassment, "Indeed I am no thief sir; I did my duty; and as my mother said before I came to sea, 'Truth may be blamed but cannot be shamed.'"

"All this is true," cried Captain Parker, "but how can you make it appear that you did your duty in

taking the property of another which did not belong to you?

Little Ben instantly fixt his bright and intelligent eyes on one of his principal accusers, "because Sir" answered he, "the property was mine: I did not steal it: I paid two shillings, all the money I had in the world, for the bottle of rum; and that man sold it me who afterwards accused me of robbing him."

"Is this true," demanded the captain, of an ill looking fellow who stood on his left hand. The man at first hesitated; but being interrogated more sternly by his captain, at length confessed that, he had received two shillings from little Ben; and delivered to him, the bottle of rum, on a promise that he would give him two more on his arrival at Jamaica.

"I am satisfied," answered the captain, and without advancing another syllable, sentenced the accuser of little Ben to receive two hundred lashes on the gangway, for the part he had acted against an innocent boy. But no sooner did Ben find his hands at liberty, than clasping them both together, and dropping on his knees, to the astonishment of all present, he burst into tears, and implored the captain to revoke the sentence he had passed.

Captain Parker grew enraged:—"How dare you, you little rascal," cried he, "presume to make so impertinent a request! If I suffer this insolence to go unpunished, I shall no longer have the command of my own ship."

On this he ordered Ben instantly to be tied up and to receive a round dozen for his pains. And no one daring to offer to interpose against a command so absolute, the captain ordered little Ben to strip.

“Come, strip sir,” vociferated he in a voice of thunder,” when the intrepidity of the boy perfectly astonished and confounded the surrounding spectators ; for in no way dismayed he began to unbutton the large loose sailor’s jacket that enveloped him with the greatest composure. A malicious grin sat on the countenance of the savage fellow for whom he was going to suffer the chastisement ; and already was the uplifted hand raised in readiness—when, lo ! from beneath the loose jacket and trousers, now thrown off, appeared to the wondering eyes of the beholders, not the form of little Ben the sailor boy, but a beautiful young woman, apparently not more than sixteen years of age, completely but plainly attired in a habit, which sat close to a shape of the most exquisite delicacy.—“Behold !” uttered she, turning to the astonished crew, and bending her knee before the amazed captain, behold an unprotected woman ! and strike if you think proper !

“No, shiver my topsails, if I do !” cried the sailor who held the rope, and dropping it to the ground in the same instant, “may my fingers rot off piecemeal if ever I raise a hand to hurt a helpless woman.”

“Go and drink a glass of the best grog I have in my ship” echoed the captain, while he humanely raised the unknown female from her suppliant posture, and waving his hand to the crew, each seaman bowing with submission, returned to his respective duties ; he then addressed the lady thus :—“Though not acquainted, Madam, with the motives of your extraordinary conduct, nor the cause which has brought you into so singular a situation, yet, permit me to apologize for the rough usage you have met with ; and to beg you

will immediately do me the favor to walk into my cabin, where you are at liberty to remain without distressing either your feelings, sex, or condition."

She obeyed in silence ; but trembled so excessively that, the captain and Adolphus both found it necessary to assist her ; and each taking an arm, they gained the entrance of the cabin just as Leonard was coming out of his. But what language can do justice to his feelings, or the surprise of Adolphus, when, happening to cast a transient glance at the lady, he sprung forward to meet her, exclaiming—" Rachel ! my own beloved Rachel !"—

" My own dear Leonard," she replied, I could not live without——

The sentence which was intended to follow was suppressed :—a smile played round her lovely features :—but joys extatic glow was too much ; for the very moment that Adolphus resigned her to the care of Leonard, she fainted in his arms.

## CHAPTER XVII.

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We will not venture to inquire too minutely into the feelings of Leonard Morrison, or those of the heroic girl of his heart when sufficiently recovered to explain to him all the imprudent steps she had taken for his sake, because sages may condemn, and rigid moralists declare that, a female thus circumstanced, deserves to

suffer all the perils of her fate. Indeed! and is there no probation then for man to suffer who has unwarily led her on to the pursuit? Ye grave philosophers, if ye have never known what it is to breathe the tender sigh of faithful love, ye shall not be at liberty to answer this question. We shall only observe that, Rachel Summerville was not despised or rejected by Leonard Morrison, for having thus ventured beyond the bounds which circumspection and prudence prescribe, because, it was for his single sake that she had braved a trial so hardy. And the very first question which Leonard asked of Adolphus when they were a little recovered from their surprize and agitation, was the following: What ought a man to do for the woman who has acted like Rachel;" cried he, "has she not risked her ~~hon-~~ her happiness, and her life for me—endured all hardships, and scorned all dangers, for my sake—nay, more dreaded than all by a virtuous female, has she not renounced the world's opinion for me too? What a scoundrel then should I be to leave her to perish in that base world which would shortly have deserted her on my account! Yet is Rachel pure as celestial angels! And believe me my dear Walsingham, I shall be more proud in calling the humble Rachel my wife, than I should be were I the titled seducer of female innocence. I mean to marry Rachel, Walsingham, the very first moment that I have an opportunity; and were my father himself here, he should not oppose me in this determined resolution."

Adolphus could not but concur in the honorable sentiments of his amiable friend; and from that moment, Miss Summerville was considered as the affianced wife of Mr. Morrison, and was treated by Captain

Parker with every mark of the most respectful attention ; a cabin being immediately appropriated to her accommodation. In addition to the little social party on board the *Felix*, the society of so lovely and interesting a young female, could not fail of being a considerable acquisition. For in Rachel, to uncommon loveliness of person, was united a manner irresistibly sweet and fascinating ; and though she possessed an extraordinary degree of spirit, it was tempered with a great deal of good humour ; which at times partook of the most lively wit. And frequently when Captain Parker used to remind her of her assuming the character of the little sailor boy, with cheeks which would rivalled the deeply blushing rose, she would smile and exclaim—"There was but one thing in which I should have disobeyed the commands of my noble captain"

"And what was that you little enchantress?" demanded the captain.

To which she sportively replied—"The going up aloft. I always trembled to see so many poor sailors hanging by the rigging. Ah ! Captain, and if you had commanded me at that instant to have followed their example, the fears of my sex had certainly betrayed poor little Ben to your displeasure."

"But the sweet little cherub that sits up aloft," would still have protected you, you know in the words of the old song," cried Captain Parker, "Providence, lady, is the mariner's sheet anchor. In the midst of the storm he flies to it for protection ; and though shipwrecked, he is yet conducted by its unseen hand to behold his native land again."—

Perhaps at the moment that Captain Parker uttered

this, it did not require a pair of spectacles to perceive that, a tear, a grateful tear of genuine sensibility, had wetted his manly cheek; which, though a hardy sailor, he did not affect to wipe away. For that tear was sacred to Providence; by whose unerring hand he had more than once been snatched from a watery grave; and been preserved through the dangers of many a perilous voyage on the Western seas. The conversation however soon took a more lively turn; the charming Rachel contributing to fascinate her attentive auditors with several melodious songs, which she warbled in a style of the most bewitching sweetness and simplicity; that left an impression which could not easily be erased from their hearts. Nor did Captain Parker or Adolphus, in contemplating the various perfections of this lovely and attractive young creature, the least wonder at the influence she possessed in the heart of her lover; or that he should risk some little danger to secure a prize so worthy of his affection.

Meanwhile the course of their voyage ran smooth and under the most auspicious omens for a considerable time. They had favorable gales, gentle seas, and light and refreshing breezes; and never was a ship's company in better condition, or a more happy party of social beings, than that which was now assembled on board the *Felix*. And if a sigh now and then escaped from the bosom of Adolphus, or a tear sometimes involuntarily filled his eyes, they were concentrated in the memory of those loved objects dearest to his heart; and whom it was possible in this world's earthly space he might never again behold, Lady Theodora Percy and his beloved cousin Edmund Austincourt. And these were objects which he felt, nor seas, nor distant

clines however foreign, or remote, could disunite from his tenderest regards.

It was one evening when all was still, and hushed, and silent as the then peaceful wave, that Adolphus stole from the society of his friends and stationed himself on the deck to contemplate, as he frequently did, the awful majesty of the moon just then rising from the white bosom of the ocean; and as he silently watched the solitary mariner who was seated at the helm, he perceived that, many times he cast an anxious and enquiring look at the horizon, which then shone bright; after that he would carefully examine the compass, whistle part of a seaman's ditty, take a fresh supply of tobacco, and return to his watch again. At length he exclaimed to a seaman who was just going to his hammock, having put on a large fur cap,—“Avast Tom and fetch me my jacket.”

To which the seaman replied,—“Shiver my timbers, what! on such a night as this! There's a fresh breeze to be sure, but, hang it, Will, there's no danger of your getting wet through to night: why the moon is shining as bright as day.

“No matter for that,” cried the old helmsman, “I would wager you the best glass of grog in the ship that we have a plaguy heavy foul storm before morning. There's no deceiving Will Sturdy. Look aloft! and that will tell you plainly what is coming! and if that wo'n't do, look at the breakers!”

“Look at your fool's head!” retorted his companion; and without further ceremony left Will Sturdy to his cogitations. In which, however, he was presently disturbed by Adolphus, who, as the wind was certainly blowing more fresh than usual, ventured to inquire if



he was fearful that a change in the weather would take place.

To which the old seaman very quaintly replied,—as to fear your honor, 'tis a sort of thing that we sailors think but little of: for when it comes we do'nt much mind it: but there's a mortal brisk gale springing up from the Westward I promise you. I always snuff a gale when it is no further off than my nose; no one better in the ship."

It is not certain whether Adolphus would have put much faith in the old seaman's prediction had not Captain Parker at that precise moment made his appearance on the deck; and looking around him, he turned towards Will Sturdy, and in a graver manner than usual exclaimed—"The breeze blows fresh Will, reef the topsails."

All hands were immediately ordered aloft: and it was very soon perceived that old Will's prediction was too clearly verified, for the wind now blew a hurricane; and the clouds gathering fast and darkening over them, gave every reason to fear the approaching storm. Meanwhile every precaution was immediately taken by the excellent management of Captain Parker; who, stationing himself at the helm, directed every man to his respective duty: encouraging them by his own example to use every exertion for the preservation of their own lives and that of their fellow creatures in a voice so firm and manly, and at the same time so consolatory that, each man, one and all, were stript instantly, in order to pump the ship should such an expedient be found necessary. The novelty of such a scene, and on such a mind as that of Adolphus may be better felt than described; who possessing himself a

fortitude and courage which was admirable, did not desert his friends at this perilous and trying moment of their lives: and to the repeated enquiries made by Leonard and Rachel to know if there is any danger he constantly replied—"Let us ultimately rely on the merciful protection of Almighty Providence my beloved friends, and do not distress me by making enquiries which are now unavailing. All I can at present learn of the brave fellows who are so manfully employed in our service is, that we are likely to be driven on the Scottish coast."

"On the Scottish coast!" exclaimed Rachel, "Oh! may heaven direct us thither in safety from this fearful storm! Let me but reach Scotland, dear Leonard, the native land of my forefathers, and in thy arms resign my latest breath! But, oh! Walsingham! this terror creeping through my heart is not half so dreadful as the thought of parting from him in the briny wave!—there if I lose him——"

"You will meet again, where seas cannot divide you," uttered Adolphus, in a voice, marked with so strong an emphasis that, its meaning could not be mistaken; and the now terrified and agonized maid clung to that bosom from which she was firmly resolved not even the appalling image of approaching death should separate her.

"Calm thy fears my dearest!" cried the now almost frantic Leonard, "and while these arms are permitted to enfold you, from thence you shall not be torn!"

Scarce had he uttered these words when a crush like the fall of a thunderbolt assailed their ears. Adolphus grasped the hand of Leonard, and the next moment rushed upon the deck, when a sight the most awful and

affecting presented itself to his fear-struck view. It was the mizzen mast cut away by order of Captain Parker; and with it two of the ablest seamen washed overboard, whom it was impossible to rescue from a watery grave. Brave fellows! they perished! and at this awful and agonizing moment the lamentation became general.

Not so the intrepid captain! he alone remained firm and collected; and stripped even to his shirt, heeded not the waves that dashed over him as he stood at the helm cheering the poor sailors, and giving every direction he thought immediately necessary for the safety of the ship.—“Hold my brave fellows,” uttered he, in a voice that struck courage, and animated hope, into every seaman’s heart, “the tempest slackens! Let us but once clear the rocks and we shall gain a place of safety! Behold you not the Scottish coast!—tack about my boys—that’s my hearties—bear away—courage my boys—droop not—faint not—the gale lowers—the sky brightens—well done my hearts of oak—another tack, and with the aid of him who rides on the bosom of these waters, will see us in the Scottish channel!—Will Sturdy, away to your post my boy!—

All this was uttered in one breath by the intrepid and brave Captain Parker; and at times even these words were scarcely intelligible from the dreadful howling of the winds, and the roaring of the tempestuous waves. Yet they had inspired hope—they had inspired courage. The men, whose exertions had a moment before seemed powerless and exhausted, were now roused to renew their energy and their strength; and cheered by the voice of their brave commander, each man rushed again to the most active duty of

the ship ; which, by the timely interposition of Providence, had, at the first break of day, just cleared the fatal rocks on which millions of souls have been known to perish.

And at this moment of miraculous preservation, the shouts of acclamation which burst from the seamen so affected the feelings of the brave Captain Parker, that he shed a torrent of involuntary tears ; administering a glass of brandy to each brave fellow before he retired to his cabin to partake of the slightest respite from his own fatigue ; during which momentary interval he flew into the presence of the three friends, assuring them that if the violence of the storm still continued to abate as it had done for the last successive hours, they might be permitted to hope for preservation from all immediate danger ; in which hope, continued Captain Parker, “ let us now cheerfully rely, as it is now my intention to steer for Scotland, on whose coast the winds have partly driven us. It is now therefore the only alternative in our present hopeless condition ; the vessel having sustained considerable damage : in the mean time, do your best to comfort that lovely creature.”

“ Indeed I am quite composed and quite happy,” cried Rachel, bursting into tears, “ but pray Captain Parker take some repose, you are exhausted with fatigue.”

To which the captain replied, “ a sailor my dear madam never thinks of repose when he is in the active employment of his duty. An hour hence, and you shall see me eating salt beef and biscuit with the best man in my ship.”

The wind had now fallen considerably ; and

blowing directly for the North, Captain Parker consulted with his mate to bear off direct for the Scottish islands, as the only means of safety in their present condition ; which was with much difficulty and skilful management adopted. In addition to which, they had an old seaman on board, who, being a native of Scotland, and an excellent sailor, occasionally furnished them with such information as was immediately necessary in exploring the Scottish seas, with which he was fully acquainted. And at half-past eight in the morning, he hastened down to the captain's cabin with the joyful intelligence that, they were only a very few leagues distant from the harbour of Montrose.

“ I ken it right weel,” cried Sandy, “ there's na a bonnier town in aw Scotland for bannocks and barley meal; and mony a canty day I ha gotten fou wi gude whiskey at auld Luckey Meg's, that keeps the sign o'the wee Black Doggie abou the braie.”

“ Say you so Sandy,” cried Captain Parker, “ why then I do'nt care how soon we cast anchor on your hospitable shore. Bear away my lads, and make for the harbour with all possible expedition.”

“ In gude honest truth ye'll tak nae harm when ye sall find yerselves in bonny Scotland,” observed Sandy, a national pride mounting to his cheek at the same instant that it sparkled in his eyes, “ a scotchman will nae turn his back on the sons of honorable industry when he kens they hae a drap o'gude blude i'their hearts.” And with these words he once more mounted the deck; leaving an impression in the heart of the lovely Rachel which awakened a thousand pleasing remembrances of her native country, and the birth place of her uncestors.”

Of that native country how often had she heard her father speak with a glistening eye and grateful heart. He had been of the clan of the noble race of Bruce Duncan, a valiant chief who had distinguished himself in the Scottish wars. And Rachel gloried in the national sentiment which had just been uttered by the plain and unsophisticated Sandy. This was not a moment however for evincing the satisfaction she had received; which from motives of the nicest delicacy she concealed from the observation of her beloved Leonard and Adolphus. For the gale which had accidentally thrown her on the shores of her native country had proved the failure of all their hopes and expectations in another. To them at least, there was a probability that, for some time, their voyage would unavoidably be delayed to the island of Jamaica, and in consequence great losses and disappointments ensue.

Yet to behold Scotland, in which she had inhaled her first breath; and where her infant days had all been passed in one uninterrupted scene of calm and peaceful enjoyments, was not a circumstance on which she could reflect with apathy, or indifference. All reflections however were now wholly absorbed in one contemplation of more moment than any passing scenes of worldly affairs. The escape from shipwreck, and the perils they had encountered on the briny waves.

Nor were Leonard and Adolphus unmindful of the protection they had received under the wise dispensations of Almighty Providence; to whom they alternately offered up prayers and thanksgivings. For let it be remembered that, if this duty is neglected to a supreme and merciful being from whose hands we receive every

blessing of our existence, we have no right to expect that those blessings will be continued; or that he will longer regard those beings who act with ingratitude towards him.

Most admirable indeed was the conduct of Captain Parker in this memorable instance; who, as soon as the stormy winds had abated, and that immediate danger was no longer to be apprehended, collected all his men around him, and exhorted them to offer up their prayers to that divine being by whose direction they had been miraculously preserved from a watery grave. —“ To lament your lost companions were now useless,” uttered he, “ brave fellows! they perished while engaged in the active employment of their duty. But we know not for what cause they were destined to perish. It is presumption to search into the inscrutable mysteries of divine appointment; whose unerring wisdom is far above our reach. Seek not therefore my friends to enquire into it. All that I would have you to reflect on is, that if a sparrow is not permitted to fall to the ground without the sanction of him who alone gave it wings, that man, the likeness of his heavenly father, shall not likewise perish, did not his ordination intend that it should be so for wise purposes which we are not permitted as yet to be informed of:—who shall presume to deny it?

If a man brings sorrow and disgrace upon himself, must he not bear it? if he brings it on another, must he not expect a punishment? and if, in the supposition that he has not done either, and then suffers wrong, who shall say that God has not allotted it to him for useful ends? Believe me, seamen, the rough seas are a useful and beneficial lesson to mankind;

for it constantly affords us an example of the vain and boasted power of all mortal existence, while it invariably stamps on our hearts and minds the vast extension of that of a superior destiny.

And with these words Captain Parker dismissed his men, distributing to each a liberal mark of his bounty.

A lesson and an example to such as wantonly inflict punishment and exercise authority, without possessing themselves a proper sense of what they owe to their Creator.

Of all the men on board the *Felix*, Sandy was on this morning the most alert; and the danger of the vessel being very soon discovered by the pilots, they ventured on board long before they came in sight of the harbour, congratulating Captain Parker on his providential escape.

"Surely," cried they, "you must have seen the vessel which was last night wrecked on this coast. The *Hindustan*, a fine East Indiaman, bound for England, with more than five hundred souls on board, not one of which, unfortunate to relate, escaped, but a sick gentleman and a poor black boy—all the rest perished."

To which the captain replied, almost horror struck by the intelligence—

"I neither saw nor spoke with any vessel that you describe, at which I cannot wonder, from the extreme darkness which over-shadowed the horizon at the immediate approach of the hurricane. So rough and violent a gale I never yet witnessed."

"Tremendous!" exclaimed one of the pilots; "yet for all that, rough is that gale which blows good to



nobody. The Hindostan was laden with the richest merchandize my eyes ever witnessed, and it was a woeful spectacle to see the poor souls all the morning floating to the shore. There was chest upon chest, and box upon box, and other goods of great value, all became the prey of"—The pilot paused.

"Rapacious monsters!" exclaimed Captain Parker, "would to Heaven that the poor, and those who were in want had only been permitted to share but a moiety of that property which is now in the hands of the unworthy, and too often the most profligate of all mankind."

"They do say," resumed the pilot, "that the poor sick gentleman was possessed of considerable property, which he brought with him from the Indies; but it is probable all perished with the Hindostan. He now lays dangerously ill at the Falcon, with the poor black boy who swam with him on his back to the shore."

As pilots, like many other men of busy calling, are much in the habit of relating more than is strictly correspondent with truth, Captain Parker did not attend to the credibility of the tale, but proceeded to give such directions as he thought necessary for the safety of the ship. And it was a joyful sound to the wounded feelings of Leonard and Adolphus, when their ears caught the welcome and then melodious strain of "quarter less five," from old Will Sturdy from whom they had before been cheered with the no less welcome sound of "by the deep nine," and "by the mark seven," which he chaunted forth in the chaste and true style of a real sailor.

"If you knew how these words vibrate on my heart, dear Leonard," exclaimed Rachel, her lovely eyes

glistening with tears, like a beautiful rose surcharged with the pearly dew of the morning. "Oh! could you but imagine for a moment how sensibly they affect me. It was my father's song, Leonard; the heaving of the lead was ever his favourite ditty. Wonder not then that at this moment I so deeply feel the impression."

Leonard smiled—the first that had brightened his countenance since the fearful storm, and pressing the snowy little hand of Rachel to his lips, with affectionate fervour exclaimed—

"I positively will not allow you, dear Rachel, to indulge in thoughts so sombre and melancholy. This is a moment of rejoicing, my lovely angel, and if you do not share it with me and Walsingham, I shall think you unkind."

Rachel, the ever fascinating and charming Rachel, immediately extended her hand to meet that of Adolphus; while she uttered with the most captivating simplicity—

"And will you think me unkind too, Mr. Walsingham. Heaven forbid, for if that be the case I must immediately resume my character of little Ben the sailor, and enlist again into the service of my noble Captain."

"You have indeed proved yourself worthy of such a commander," cried Adolphus; and Captain Parker immediately made his entrance in the cabin, and approaching Rachel with every feature irradiated with cheerful good humour, tapped her fair cheek while he sung—

“O’ danger’s o’er,

“Grief no more,

“Shall with frowns appear,

“But mirth and glee, merrily,

“Ever crown the year.”

“There, Miss Somerville, cried he, “you have the very best specimen I can give you of my vocal abilities.”

“And no mean one neither,” cried Rachel, entering into the spirit of his good humoured pleasantry, while the Captain continued to rejoice and animate the spirits of his youthful companions, by immediately informing them that they were now safe in the harbour of Montrose, and that the boats were now actually getting ready to convey them on shore.

Rachel instantly retired to her little cabin, and in a few minutes equipped herself in her habit, having then on a morning dress with which she had provided herself, with a few other necessary articles of wearing apparel, when she came on board the *Felix*, and a small black beaver hat, in which she looked most irresistibly and bewitchingly lovely, her countenance being more archly pretty than what might be termed expressively beautiful; and her brilliant dark eyes beamed with more good humour than that degree of sensibility which sometimes only renders a female beauty insipidly languid. Meanwhile some little arrangement took place in the attire of Leonard and Adolphus, both providing themselves with sufficient cash to defray their expences on shore.

“We shall immediately proceed to the Falcon Inn,” cried Parker, “at which place I am apprehensive we shall have occasion to remain some time, the ship having sustained such material damage, that it

will be necessary to put her into immediate repair." With no small regret he then related to them the loss of the Hindostan with her unfortunate crew; save only the invalid gentleman and his black servant.— "and who now remains at the Falcon inn severely confined by indisposition," continued the captain, "but it is possible that I may yet have the pleasure of conversing with him. I am indeed shocked at the catastrophe; of which I am anxious to learn the particulars. You see my dear young friends that we are not alone the sufferers on this melancholy occasion; and we may also learn from it the great uncertainty of all human expectations."

The compassionate heart of Rachel heaved a sigh to the memory of the poor souls who had perished; and the captain taking her hand conducted her on the deck; when the loss of the mizzen mast, and the torn rigging, with the otherwise shattered appearance of the fine ship *Felix*, affected her in a manner she could scarcely describe. And whether it was that, the expression of her countenance at this moment was perceptible to all around her, or that her attractive loveliness excited general admiration, it was impossible to withdraw the attention of Sandy; who, looking at her with peculiar earnestness, broke out into the following exclamation to the great amusement of Captain Parker:—"Wow! lassie, but there's mony ane will tak nae shame to hae a blink o' yere bonnie een. The braw lads wad gie aw the siller and gear an' they could prie a kiss o' yere wee bonnie mou."

The cheeks of Rachel at so singular an address from the old scotchman were crimsoned with blushes of the deepest dye, as his rough compliment was by no means

unintelligible to her, although hearly so to Leonard and Adolphus, who joined the captain in laughing most heartily at it. They were now conveyed on shore; and from thence they proceeded almost immediately to the Falcon inn. Nor was poor little Sambo forgotten. The faithful little animal appeared to be truly sensible of his situation on being once more on terra firma, by wagging his tail, shaking his ears, and testifying the most lively demonstrations of joy. A proof, incontestible, that, gratitude and faithful fidelity are inherent in the canine race; and that a dog will never desert his master, unless forced away by treacherous means, or lost by casual, or accidental occurrence. Oh! would to heaven, that, it were equally implanted in the breast of man! Were that the case, friendship would not have to mourn over misplaced confidence; and love no more become the victim of his delusive arts.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

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Leonard, Adolphus, Captain Parker, and Rachel sat down to partake of a family dinner precisely at four o'clock. They had been received at the Falcon with the most marked attention by the host (whose name was Duncan Campbell) and hostess. He had kept the Falcon for many years; in which he had been

placed by the late, lamented earl of Glencoy; whose magnificent mansion was situated about four miles distant from the town of Montrose.

To this noble earl a most unfortunate and singular story was attached; which had run current for many years all over Scotland; and particularly in Montrose, to which the seat of the late earl was so immediately contiguous. But Duncan Campbell, to whom it was probably a matter of no surprise, he having been many years in the service of the Glencoy family, would never permit this circumstance to be mentioned at the Falcon, and if any traveller who frequented his house by only mere accident made any enquiries respecting the credibility of the circumstance alluded to, Duncan would immediately silence them by the following reply, at the same moment that he would exhibit the most extraordinary agitation:—"Indeed, I dinna ken Sir. I dinna wish to ken nathing of aw about it. I wad be thinking of my ain business; and that's muckle enough for ony mon to mind that wad be grinding o' the siller." Nor was Margaret Campbell (who was in the Scotch phrase a wee bit canty body) any more disposed to be communicative on this subject than her gude mon, as she always answered her female gossips who used to attack her in a similar way, in words to this effect:—"I cannie woman, dinna fash me wi' ony sic like daft story again. Gin ye whar me, ye wad mine ye're ain affairs." Notwithstanding which however, Margaret never listened to these inquiries without betraying some emotion! which she endeavoured by every art in her power to conceal.

This conduct in her and her husband too frequently excited not only the astonishment, but suspicions, very

unfavorable to their characters, of some of their customers, who paid nightly visits to the Falcon inn ; in which it might be conjectured that envy had no small share. For the countess of Glencoy who had many years survived the unfortunate earl, and who still resided in the family mansion, bestowed the most distinguished marks of her favor and liberality on the host and hostess of the Falcon inn ; which, in addition to the overflowing custom of the house, rendered Duncan Campbell a very ostensible personage in the town of Montrose. To adopt his own language, he was “grinding o’ the siller” pretty tolerably easy ; for which many of his contemporaries envied, hated, feared,—but courted, caressed, and flattered him.

As Captain Parker had been for several days after their arrival at Montrose busily engaged in making every immediate arrangement necessary to put the vessel under repair he had but little opportunity of either seeing, or conversing with, his host and hostess, but the moment that he had, he enquired after the health of the invalid gentleman,—“His name is Montreville, I understand, said Captain Parker.”

To which Duncan replied,—“Ye’re right sair, Captain Montreville, the bonniest mon that ever ganged over the Tweed, or ever set foot on Scottish ground. I tak nae shame sair in saying as muckle, for I ken him weel.”

“Then you had some knowledge of Captain Montreville before he was wrecked on this coast ?” said Captain Parker, “I have no wish to be impertinently curious, but I hear that his losses in the Hindostan were considerable.”

To which Duncan quaintly replied,—“There sair

I must be telling ye<sup>o</sup> its nae truth; he had nae over muckle to lose for aw that. I wad nae gie the bonnie chiel for aw the siller in Glencoy Castle."

"But what wad ye gie for the bonnie leedy o' Glencoy Castle," inquired a young islander who wrapped in his plaid had been taking a general survey of Captain Parker, and who appeared to be very attentive to the foregoing conversation.

This question was not replied to by Duncan Campbell, but he cast a look at the highlander which was perfectly intelligible to him, though by no means so to the Captain, whom he informed that, he was going to the apartment of the invalid, and if he had any commands, he would carry them with pleasure.

"No further than as a fellow sufferer on the late melancholy catastrophe," cried Captain Parker, "I am an entire stranger; but that does not prevent me from begging you will present my most sincere good wishes to Captain Montreville for his speedy recovery."

"Sair, ye need na doubt the punctability of Duncan Campbell; I ken right weel I hae the honor of speaking to a gentleman; and I dinna doubt but the bonnie captain will be proud o' the distinction ye hae shewn him; I dinna doubt it ava sair."—And Duncan almost immediately made his exit.

As the curiosity of women is generally more alert than that of men, Rachel, who had been with Leonard and Adolphus to take a walk round the town, and who had been accompanied by them to the public library, which was situated in a fine ancient building in Montrose, had gathered sufficient information of the visitors there to find that, there was something extremely mysterious attached to the Glencoy family with which



Duncan Campbell appeared to be in a great measure connected with; and that something Rachel was particularly anxious to know. The very moment therefore that Captain Parker joined them at dinner she exclaimed,—“ Oh ! Captain Parker, I have been so highly gratified this morning you cannot imagine ! whom do you suppose we beheld sitting at the door of the public library ? why the beautiful countess of whom we have heard such praises since our arrival at Montrose ; and whom they call ‘ the bonnie leedy o’ Glencoy Castle.’ She staid a considerable time to exchange books ; and every body seemed eager to obtain a glance of her. I of course was not without my share of curiosity ; and I was more fortunate than the rest : for at the very moment that I ran to the door of the library, the countess of Glencoy put her head out of the carriage window, and I never beheld such a face before.’

“ She is indeed most exquisitely lovely,” cried Adolphus.

“ And a widow—a young and beautiful widow,” retorted Captain Parker with an arch smile. “ Upon my word, Mr. Walsingham, it were better to shield your heart than to suffer your eyes thus incautiously to stray towards the beautiful Countess.”

To which Adolphus immediately replied, not however without betraying some confusion—

“ Oh, Sir, there is at present little danger of my becoming a captive to the all-conquering charms of the bonny lady, as she is called, for you are not aware that I bear a charmed talisman about me ; my heart is perfectly secure, I promise you.”

Leonard and Rachel exchanged looks of some surprise, and the Captain smiled as she exclaimed—

“ Ah ! Captain, but there is such a tale ; I heard it all in the library, and when I mentioned it to Mrs. Campbell, you cannot conceive how angry she looked, while she contradicted the assertion in a manner which, I thought, gave her some pain, because it had not sincerity to recommend it ; and I am very much inclined to believe what the lady in black asserted to be actually true, for she protested that the late unfortunate earl came to his death through jealousy, in a fit of which he shot himself ; although it was constantly reported that he had died from some sudden indisposition, the cause of which was never afterwards made known to his lordship’s vassals ; and that in consequence his beautiful countess, who mourned his death incessantly, shut herself up for many months in the deep retiring shades of Glencoy Castle.”—

At this precise moment Duncan Campbell came to announce to his guests, that the dinner was on table, and Rachel promised that she would tell the remainder of her story at a more seasonable opportunity, when Duncan Campbell was not likely to become an auditor, of a tale which was still wrapt up in impenetrable mystery.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Captain Parker was under the indispensable necessity of informing his young friends, a few days after the ensuing conversation, of the present state of the *Felix*, which, all circumstances considered, might very probably delay their voyage for several months, it being absolutely necessary for the vessel to undergo a thorough repair, in consequence of the serious damage she had received; in which case he felt it incumbent on him as a man of honour and integrity, to disclose a matter of such essential point to themselves in the future arrangement of their intended plans and speculations.

“Well, I do not care, Captain Parker,” cried Leonard, “as the winds have blown us hither, whether we like it or not, I am resolved to remain till a more prosperous gale alters our course; we may probably be detained here three months. You can precisely answer that question, cannot you?”

To which the Captain, without the smallest hesitation, replied—

“I can precisely say, that we shall not be ready to sail from this port at an earlier period than the time you have mentioned.”

“I am satisfied,” cried Leonard, “then I will write to old dad immediately, and tell him that I am going to turn Scotch merchant instead of a West India one. The credentials that I hear about me are as good in

one country as in another. I should hope Captain 'to do unto all men as I wish they should do unto me.' This is my creed; it has grown up with me from infancy. I learned it from a kind indulgent father, and ever since it has been engraven on my heart."

"And he could not have taught you a better, had you sailed the world over in search of one," exclaimed Captain Parker, "for it is one that will stick by you, my dear young friend, to the latest moment of your existence, nor can I sufficiently admire your sentiments."

Leonard, who was now alone with the worthy Captain, exultingly cried—

"Ah! but I will not suffer you to depart till you have learned my sentiments equally on another subject; I will open my whole heart to you, for why should I conceal it, when truth and sincerity are its inmates. You must know, Captain Parker, that my old dad, though one of the best fathers breathing in existence, has some how or other an odd sort of comical manner of shewing it. Now I have loved my dear little Rachel Summerville these two years, and though I have ventured to hint to my father several times that I intended to marry her, yet I could never once get him into a humour to give me his consent."

"At which," cried the Captain, "I cannot but express my surprise, the object being in every way so worthy of your affection. Believe me I think very highly of Miss Summerville, and had I a son to-morrow, should not at all object to his forming a connection with so charming a creature; but excuse me, my dear young friend, I mean no disparagement to the charms of the lovely Rachel, yet your father may

consider things in a very different light to what you and I do, and conceive that the qualifications of the heart and mind are by no means an equivalent for the want of fortune."

"There, Captain, you have hit the mark," exclaimed Leonard, "this is exactly what my father thinks, I assure you. He would have no objections to Rachel Summerville, if Rachel Summerville brought a fortune of ten thousand pounds into the family; and there my old dad and I disagree most famously; we could never settle our accounts on this essential point, do what we could, for I would sooner marry the girl that I loved, if she had not a single *sous*, than the daughter of an East Indian Nabob, were she possessed of millions, whom I could only behold with indifference. Love is a beautiful rose, Captain, which we may admire, but the eye would soon cease to gaze, did not its bewitching fragrance charm our senses; and that charm will live when its leaves are all gone and faded. I feel well convinced that I should love my Rachel were she a thousand times less lovely, because I am acquainted with her amiable disposition; in short, to be more plain Captain Parker, I mean to marry Rachel to-morrow morning. Have you any possible objection to such an arrangement? You cannot; I know you cannot. Her appearance in this country, in which I have every reason to suppose that she was born, without any natural protector, may be injurious to the reputation and feelings of the lovely angel, whom I feel at this moment I am bound to protect by the most sacred ties of honorable affection:—and there can be no honor in the breast of that man who would not immediately snatch the woman he loves from any

situation in which her reputation may be reflected on with the slightest impunity provided the means are in his power:—what say you captain?

The captain who had never once removed his eyes from the fine, ingenious, and manly countenance of Leonard Morrison, was so struck by the manner in which he had uttered the warm and spontaneous effusions of his heart, that he almost involuntarily held out his hand towards him, at the same instant that he exclaimed:—"What do I say of you!—why I do say that, if you were the son of a prince, you would reflect more honor to him than all the splendours of his throne; and that I shall feel more pleasure in congratulating Miss Summerville on the possession of such a husband, than I should in calling her queen of Great Britain."

Leonard returned the grasp of friendship to the worthy captain; and Adolphus at that moment entering the room, it was agreed that the nuptials of this amiable pair should be performed in the most private manner that was possible by the Rev. Mr. M'Greggor, to whom Duncan Campbell was instantly despatched; and whose instructions were absolutely necessary on the above occasion; after which Leonard proposed to hire a small cottage contiguous to the town of Montrose, where he would immediately remove Rachel; and in which Adolphus should also reside with them. He also invited Captain Parker to become his guest instead of remaining at the inn; which invitation was not accepted by the captain till he obtained a promise from Leonard that he should be permitted to pay for the expense of his board and lodging while he continued to inspect the repair of his ship.

This arrangement having taken place to the entire

satisfaction of all parties, the ensuing morning Leonard led his beautiful bride to church accompanied by Adolphus, Captain Parker, and Duncan Campbell and his wee wife, who were the only witnesses judged to be immediately necessary on the occasion. A certificate was then made out of the said marriage; the parson liberally paid; and a handsome dinner provided at the Falcon inn for the bridal party; at which Mrs. Campbell was thought a very proper personage to preside, in compliment to the lovely Rachel: and to say truth, the honors of the day were conducted with a delicacy and respect that did great credit to the house of Duncan Campbell. Captain Montreville, who was still an invalid guest, no sooner heard of this event, than he sent, in return for Captain Parker's kind inquiries, his most sincere congratulations, with a hope that, he should shortly have the pleasure of paying his personal respects.

Previous to this however, Rachel had frequent opportunities of both seeing and conversing with captain Montreville's black servant, who was called Juba, and of whom she always made inquiries after the health of his master; to which she was answered by him in a manner equally cordial. And one day she received the following answer:—"Masa, tank misse great, great deal; masa no say how much he tank misse. Him tell masa Campbell, him quite pleased with misse; and when him come out of sick room, he make fine, fine present to misse, because she ask after masa when him sick."

To which Rachel deeply colouring, in a supposition that her inquiries after Captain Montreville out of the purest motives of compassion might in some measure

be misinterpreted by the unsophisticated black, instantly replied,—“Indeed I am very glad to hear that your master’s better Juba, but as to presents, I do not want any thing of the kind ; for if you had been sick instead of your master, I should have made just the same inquiries after you as I have done for Captain Montreville. It is of little consequence to me Juba, whether people are black or white when I am led to make inquiries from the consciousness that they are suffering anguish and pain :—such only was my motive for asking after your master ; of whose severe indisposition Mr. Campbell had informed me.”

Whether it was the peculiar earnestness with which Rachel had uttered these words, or the uncommon beauty of her countenance, that occasioned Juba to fix his dark intelligent eyes full on her, remains undecided ; but certain it is that, he left her with making the following remark ; which in future made Rachel more cautious in making inquiries after the invalid :—“Masa see you make heart go jump, jump, you look so like angel.”

But a circumstance very soon occurred to introduce both Rachel and her husband to the notice of Captain Montreville. Duncan Campbell having in vain sought for a residence for the new married pair among the cottages near to the town of Montrose, by some means made the captain acquainted with the nature of his disappointment ; adding with a sagacious look perfectly intelligible to him,—“I dinna ken nae habitation fit for the residence of sic a bonnie pair but ane I dare na mention ; gin yere honor wad nae pardon the unco liberty of Duncan Campbell.”

To which Captain Montreville immediately replied,



—“ I am apt to think that I shall pardon you any liberty when it is exercised to befriend strangers whom the winds have thrown on your coast for safety and protection. You may use your discretion therefore Duncan, with respect to the offering of Vine Cottage for the accommodation of Mr. and Mrs. Morrison. They have been extremely obliging in making some kind inquiries after my health ; and I am most happy in the opportunity I now have of evincing my gratitude towards them.”

“ Gin ye wat but speir a word wi a the bonnie chiel,” cried Duncan, expressing the most lively demonstrations of joy that he had gained a point with Captain Montreville which he had thought doubtful, “ gin yere honor wad but tak a blink o’ the wee lassie: wou, but she’s bonnie ! wad ye but just gae ben and speir we ’em, it would be paying them a vary great distinction.”

“ Well, well, Duncan, I shall consider of it,” cried the captain, “ in the meanwhile, go and present my compliments, and inform them that Vine Cottage is very much at their service.”

Away posted Duncan Campbell with the Captain’s kind offer, and the very next morning preparations were making for the removal to Vine Cottage, which had been purchased by Captain Montreville for his mother long before he went to the Indies ; and previous to that unfortunate event in the Glencoy family, in which, though innocent, he had been too fatally a party concerned ; and over which, though time had imperviously thrown a veil, yet was the wound still fated to rankle in the victim’s heart ; and it was to cure a diseased mind, springing from some latent

cause of inward grief, more than any effects of a disordered constitution, which had again suddenly brought Captain Montreville to the shores of his native land, from which he had been hurried by encountering scenes of the most indescribable agony. From the indisposition, however, which had attacked him after the perilous voyage, he was now rapidly recovering ; and one morning, induced by the uncommon fineness of the weather, took a walk in the plantations of Duncan Campbell, near to which was a beautiful grotto, almost embowered by the deep surrounding shades ; and to this spot he unconsciously strayed, and certainly would have entered but for the sound of a melodious voice, which was sweetly warbling in a most enchanting style, the Admired song of "*My love is like the red red rose*," and Captain Montreville was rooted to the spot from whence it proceeded, convinced it was some female who was seated in the grotto, whose privacy he thought it improper to molest ; he would instantly have pursued his walk without discovering himself to the fair songstress, had not Sambo thought proper to announce his approach to the now equally surprised and embarrassed Rachel, who having rambled out for a walk, taking Sambo for a companion, had, on her return, stopped at the grotto to rest herself, knowing that it was not far distant from the house ; and by this accidental occurrence suddenly encountered an object she had long felt some curiosity to behold.

Captain Montreville, not an old invalid gentleman, as she imagined he was, but one in the full bloom of life, whose manly and elegant figure might have represented the Apollo of Belvidere. His complexion

indeed was pale, but perfectly clear; and his fine eyes beamed with an expression at once noble and benignant, while he bowed with a grace which was peculiar to himself, apologizing for the evident surprise he had occasioned her; and Rachel, now conscious that her song had been listened to, and by Captain Montreville, blushed with all the charms of native modesty, while she answered—

“To me, Sir, there is not the slightest apology due. I did not expect to encounter a stranger in this sequestered spot, much less”—

The earnestness with which Captain Montreville surveyed her at this moment, caused Rachel to blush still deeper, and she paused while he replied—

“You did not expect to encounter me; very probably not, Madam, but I am very glad that you have, for it has afforded me a gratification to which I have long been a stranger; the pleasure of hearing the Scottish melody warbled in its pure and simple style of native sweetness, without being spoiled by art and affectation, which so effectually disgusts the ear without ever vibrating on the heart. Come Mrs. Morrison, since we are thus introduced to each other without that ceremony which too often banishes all social confidence or friendship, permit me to accompany you on the remainder of your walk, after which you shall introduce me to your husband and the worthy Captain Parker, to whom I am equally obliged for the favour of so many kind inquiries.”

All Rachel could now stammer out to the very elegant compliment conferred on her by Captain Montreville, was—

“Indeed, Sir, we felt most anxious for your recovery.”

To which the Captain smilingly replied, as he led her from the grotto, Sambo skipping after them with the greatest alacrity—

“I know it, Madam. Juba has been a faithful reporter; he also described you very accurately: the pencil of a Rubens or a Titian could not have presented me with a more highly finished colouring of your charms.”

Rachel was now silent, partly from embarrassment, and because she had never been addressed in such a high strain of compliment before; and it was a most seasonable relief to her when she perceived Leonard and Adolphus coming towards them.

“My love we have been waiting breakfast this hour, for you,” cried Leonard, but not before he had bowed most respectfully to Captain Montreville, who in very few words related his accidental meeting with Mrs. Morrison at the grotto; and that he had thus availed himself of the pleasure of accompanying her during the remainder of her walk;—“For which Mr. Morrison,” uttered the Captain, “I hope you will not consider me presumptive.”

A conversation without the smallest reserve now immediately took place; in which Leonard embraced the opportunity of offering his very grateful acknowledgments to Captain Montreville for his kind permission to hire Vine Cottage; and begged that he would be pleased to say on what terms they were to take possession of it.

To which the Captain replied with a most benignant smile,—“You are precisely to remain in it as long as

you choose Mr. Morrison ; but I positively refuse to be considered a landlord on any terms whatsoever. There is the cottage very much at your service ; and I believe in tolerable condition : though it is long since I have passed over its threshold.”—Here Captain Montreville evidently struggled to suppress some painful recollections, from a deep drawn sigh which at that moment escaped unwarily from his breast ; quickly endeavouring however to resume his composure he continued,—“ for you will not find it wholly uninhabited. I left it in the possession of two aged and infirm domestics who have faithfully discharged their respective duties by a life of long service and fidelity ; and Duncan informs me that both Owen and Peggy are still able to look after Vine Cottage, their chief occupation being to keep it in good repair ; and for which I have taken care that they should annually receive a small remuneration from the hands of Duncan Campbell. Here then Mr. and Mrs. Morrison is the history of Vine Cottage ; which, from some peculiar and effecting events, has not been my favorite abode for a long succession of time. But that is of no consequence in the present instance. You will find it a residence not wholly unworthy of your acceptance ; and Owen and Peggy will do their best to render it as commodious as possible for your reception when you shall think proper to remove to it. Duncan Campbell has received my instructions for that purpose ; and the old couple are by this time duly informed of the arrival of their expected guests.”—

*All this was uttered by Captain Montreville with an easy air of elegant good breeding, which was at the same instant strongly marked with a sentiment of*

candour, liberality, and friendship; and the delighted Leonard warmly exclaimed,—“ I know not how to thank you sir, I cannot indeed express my gratitude at the flattering and distinguished mark of favor which you are pleased to shew me. The more noble when I consider that it is to an entire stranger on whom you are conferring such kindness.”

“ So much the better,” cried Captain Montreville, “ I am very glad to find that you want words, and that I do not require any ; for I cannot bear to be thanked at any time for only doing my duty. Come let us adjourn to breakfast, for which I think your fair bride has waited no inconsiderable time.”

As they walked towards the house Juba came running out of breath in search of his master, demonstrating the most lively symptoms of joy at beholding him, and exclaiming,—“ Juba fear masa no well ; but now Juba see masa, him quite happy. Juba sing, dance all day long, because him see masa glad, look merry.”

Captain Montreville smiled most cordially on his faithful attendant while he uttered,—“ I do not care how much you sing and dance Juba if you will learn good manners ; I positively protest that you are now preventing Mrs. Morrison from going into the house. Get out of the way you stupid dog ; and tell Duncan to let us have the breakfast sent up immediately. You see Mr. Morrison I have on this morning invited myself to be your guest at your *dejuné*, another day you shall be mine.

The order of the captain was obeyed immediately after their return to the house, for the breakfast was brought in by Duncan ; who seeing him seated by the side of the lovely Rachel, and in a most familiar con-

versation with her, felt an inward satisfaction which he could scarcely conceal; just muttering, but not loud enough to be heard, all the way down stairs,—“Wou! but its bonnie”—till he encountered his wee sonsie wiffee in the bar; to whom he instantly exclaimed,—“Ah! Meggie woman! ye dinna ken wha we hae gotten wi the bonnie bride this ilka day. There’s nae less than Captain Montreville his vary sel sitting a’ thegither wi the bonnie chappeis. Wou! Meggie, but it cheers my vary blude to see them a’ sae bonnie. There’s mony a ane wad be mickle proud a sic like distinction.”

This was uttered in the warmth of a true hearted honest scotchman. There was no dissimulation; he felt what he said; and he wished the same to be understood by the gude wife; who immediately replied with a sort of intelligent arch smile which played round her dimpled mouth with a great deal of sweetness and good humour,—“We muna tell ony sic tale to a bodie that’s nae vary far distant frae Glencoy Castle; ye ken Duncan it wad na du; for a’ that I’m unco glad to see the bonnie lassie made sae mickle a’ by the bonnie captain.”

The entrance of Captain Montreville’s black servant now put an end to this conversation at the present time. Meanwhile Captain Parker had joined the breakfast party up stairs, and was introduced to, and most cordially received by, the distinguished visitor of Leonard Morrison; who without reserve had imparted his concerns, and his speculative plans, with a short history of his own family to Captain Montreville; and he immediately undertook to recommend him to the first commercial business in the city of Edinburgh; as

also to his several connections in other parts of Scotland; of which he possessed some of the most respectable.—“In which you will be warmly received the moment that they find you are worthy of their confidence,” said the Captain, “The natives of Scotland breathe the very soul of benevolence when they are sufficiently conscious of the merit of the object whom they feel an interest for; and when once this is the case, believe me, Mr. Morrison, that they will never desert you. It is the distinguishing and most noble characteristic of this country to be firm and lasting in their friendships, as they are unshaken in their integrity and fidelity towards those to whom they become attached.”

The glistening eye of Rachel confessed in silence a grateful acknowledgement for the warm plaudits which were bestowed on the national virtues of her countrymen; and Captain Montreville perceiving her emotion instantly exclaimed,—“You are partial to this country Mrs. Morrison.”—While Rachel replied with a deep kindling colour mounting in her fair cheek,—“I was born in this country sir; from which, though exiled for many years, yet I cannot return to without remembrances, the most sacred and affecting; nor forget that it is the land which gave my forefathers birth.”

I do not wish to enter into any tedious detail of my own history but I have reason to assure you that some of my ancestors were of the race of Bruce Duncan, so highly distinguished in the Scottish wars; nor need I blush to own an origin that knew no stain. Yet I was born in the midst of a camp, the daughter of a highland soldier; my mother, unused to luxury,



reared me in all the perils of war and hardships of a long campaign ; but at last fell a sacrifice herself to a ruthless fever. I alone remained the solace and yet the grief of a wretched father ; and when the war was ended he brought me to my Scottish home, the highland mountains, and there I imbibed a strong love for my native country. I lived in peace and bliss, healthful, young, and innocent, beneath the roof of my highland grandmother, till destiny again sent my father to the wars, from which he never more returned ; and my grandmother having long been consigned to the grave, what remained for me, Captain Montreville, but honest service, which I embraced, under the protection of the best and most angelic of women, the widow of a brave English Officer ; with her I departed from my native shores, and arrived in England. My protectress died in a short time from this period, and poor Rachel had still been bereft of fortune and of friends, a highland soldier's orphan, but for one that's nae sitting at a very far distance fra me, Leonard Morrison."

The altered tone of Rachel, as she uttered these words in the Scottish dialect, the touching simplicity with which she had told her little tale, and the picturesque beauty of her pretty face, as she had addressed the last sentiment in grateful acknowledgment to her only protector, had an effect which was almost irresistible on the hearts of her auditors ; and Captain Montreville arose, highly gratified and pleased with the society of his newly acquired acquaintance, and repeating his assurances of his continued friendship ; and Leonard having written a long letter to his father, concealing nothing but his marriage, which he resolved

at present not to disclose, 'with a slight sketch of Scotch manners, and the hospitality he had been treated with under the roof of Duncan Campbell, with a very extended account of his meeting a friend in Captain Montreville, prepared to join Adolphus, Captain Parker, and Rachel, to an early dinner, after which they prepared immediately to set out under the escort of Duncan Campbell for Vine Cottage, which was not more than two miles distant from the town of Montrose, seated in a most delightful glen, which commanded on one side a perspective view of the town and harbour of Montrose, and on the other a prospect the most grand and picturesque of Glencoy Castle and its towering and magnificent battlements, which in days of old had given shelter to many a Scottish Chief, either when crowned with victorious wreaths, or when bidding defiance to the rude invaders of his native land.

Who ever has visited Scotland, that will not acknowledge its pre-eminent beauty, in the majesty of its snow-covered mountains, its lovely glens, and its deep surrounding shades. All which Duncan Campbell took great pains immediately to point out to the observation of the travellers he was conducting to Vine Cottage.

“And turn ay to your left sair,” uttered he, “and ye will nae see sic a prospect as the like o’ that in ony country i’ the mickle world. Gin ye had seen Glencoy Castle in the time o’ the Scottish wars, ye wad tak nae shame in pronouncing it the bonniest hold o’ ony braie laird on a’ this side o’ the Tweed.”

“And turn ye ay to the right, there’s the varry bonnie castle itsel stands facing ye.”

“ Ah! Mr. Campbell, but there is one thing I cannot get you to tell me,” cried Rachel, with a significant glance directed towards her smiling companions.

Duncan, wholly unprepared for such an attack, stared with a look of awkward embarrassment on the arch and lively countenance of the pretty Rachel, while with apparent caution he replied—

“ I canna tell ye what I dinna ken myself leedy.”

To which Rachel archly answered—

“ What have you never seen the bonnie leedy that dwells in Glencoy Castle; why they do say strange things about her and the unfortunate earl who died in a fit of jealousy. Did you never hear this story, Mr. Campbell.”

Duncan, who had evinced no small degree of impatience and agitation while Rachel was speaking, now turned towards her with an air of supplication, which alternately confounded and surprised Leonard, Adolphus, and Captain Parker; and in a low voice repeated the following words:—

“ God sake, leedy, dinna mention ony sic like tale in the presence o’ Captain Montreville; ye dinna ken whar the shoe pinches, or ye wad na spear ony thing of a’ about sic a daft story.”

They were now in sight of Vine Cottage, and Duncan Campbell, who had relapsed into a sort of sullen silence, left an impression on the minds of his companions, that the mystery which was suspended over the Glencoy family, was in some way or other connected with the destiny of Captain Montreville, which of course imposed upon them the necessity of restraint; and the caution of Duncan Campbell was observed on their entrance to Vine Cottage, before the

door of which stood the ancient domestics already described by the Captain, and who now welcomed their expected visitors with every mark of the most respectful attention. Peggy conducted Rachel into the apartments they were at present to occupy ; the neatness and elegance of which alone demonstrating who had been their owner. A whole length portrait of the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots was stationed in the sitting room which was expressively beautiful ; and another of the celebrated Scotch poet Robert Burns was placed in a conspicuous point of view ; and under it the following lines in honor of his memory, which Peggy informed Rachel were the composition of Captain Montreville himself, who now perused them with peculiar satisfaction.

To the

*MEMORY OF ROBERT BURNS.*

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Sweet Bard, to feeling and to virtue dear,  
 Long shall thy memory claim the pensive tear !  
 Thy rustic song give transport to my heart,  
 And own the magic of thy tuneful art.  
 The fondest pride that Scotia ever knew,  
 When she gave birth immortal BURNS to you !  
 Oh ! could I sound thy own soft thrilling lays,  
 Each hill and vale should echo to thy praise !  
 And Scotia's hills should echo back again,  
 And sigh responsive to, thy pleasing strain !  
 The flowerets sweet thy fancy lov'd to trace,  
 Reflect, in scent and hue, thy native grace !  
 For thy sake, dear each blue-bell still shall be,  
 And gowans, ever welcome guests with me.  
 What tho' no " storied urn," nor pompous bust,  
 Adorn's that spot where lies thy sacred dust ;—

Though humble turf be bound upon thy breast,  
And not a stone has marked thy place of rest—  
Thou'rt fled where worth is better understood ;  
Thy brightest monument is peace with God\*.

Peggy next pointed out to the observation of Rachel a little arbour, curiously formed, for the retreat of those who wished to retire from the intrusive, or watchful, eye of inquiry, in the bosom of solitude or study ; around which, not the flaunting rose, or elegant jessamine, but the humble sweet brier and the lilac rivalled each other in freshness and profusion. A few tufts of violets and some wild strawberry plants grew likewise in this favorite retreat ; but this was all. It is true, more than once since the absence of Captain Montreville, Owen had attempted to intrude some gaudier flowers, such as tulips, London pride, and columbines ; but Peggy content with the humble sweets which she had culled from the wild heath, and transplanted from the rugged mountain's side, would not receive from art what nature had so liberally supplied ; declaring that “ she preferred a sprig of new blown may to all the carnations that ever grew. And Owen, who, not more from habit than inclination, had always coincided with her opinion, adopted it on the present occasion ; concluding that Peggy was always right.

It may be doubted whether husbands in the present day would have subscribed to the very unfashionable mode which Owen followed ; but Owen was a true

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\* The above lines were written by the author on visiting the grave of Robert Burns in the church yard of Dumfries on her tour through Scotland.

lover of the old school: in the new school they manage very differently.

While Rachel was thus engaged with Peggy, Duncan Campbell was no less actively employed with Owen in conducting the three gentlemen all over the beautiful plantations belonging to Vine Cottage; and in shewing them every thing worthy of notice. A lovely stream, the banks of which were bordered with wild plants and flowers, flowed in a meandering direction, and gave a cool and refreshing appearance to the whole of this beautiful little place; which seemed formed for domestic happiness and rural retirement. And after Rachel had taken a survey of all the beauties which surrounded this enchanting spot she hastened to join Leonard and Adolphus: describing all she had seen in sentiments of the warmest admiration.—

“You cannot conceive any thing more delightful,” uttered she, “than the interior of this charming cottage, and the order in which it has been kept by these good old people. I have been arranging with Peggy the economy of our little establishment; and I assure you she perfectly agrees with me in the plan I have adopted. You will find me a very notable housekeeper Leonard I promise you; I am used to it. In the mean time will you be pleased Captain Parker to come and take tea in Peggy’s little parlour; to-morrow we shall be seated in that appropriated to our use.”

“And pray Mrs. Morrison, since you have taken all this trouble into your own fair hands,” cried Captain Parker, “may I take the liberty of asking who is to have the honor of being your banker for cash to defray the expences of your little family on the present occasion.”

This unexpected enquiry brought a crimson blush into the face of Rachel in one moment; and she turned her expressive eyes full on her husband, who could scarcely refrain from laughing at her embarrassment, when she exclaimed—

“ I have no banker but my husband, Leonard Morrison; and before I had him, I always drew a bill upon content for the deficiencies of fortune.”

Had Rachel been consulting her toilette for three hours, she could not have found any thing which could set off her fine complexion so admirably as this sentence now did in the eye of her fond husband, who calling her aside, immediately gave her a purse most liberally supplied. There, my dearest, uttered he, while an undefinable expression betrayed his warm approbation of her conduct, by a look which volumes could not have more forcibly conveyed. “ You will find a sum more than sufficient for your present use. The remainder is your own, to purchase what necessaries you may think proper. I shall never ask you, to what uses you have appropriated it, possessing as I now do the most unlimited confidence in my Rachel’s prudence and discretion.”

“ Mrs. Morrison will you be pleased to accompany Mr. Walsingham and I to Peggy’s little parlour, where she is waiting tea for us,” cried Captain Parker, advancing towards her and gently taking her hand, for he perceived that this delicate proof of the kindness and generosity of her husband had sensibly affected her even to tears.

The heart of Rachel throbbed with gratitude towards the only being in whose eyes she wished her conduct to be most approved—her husband, her protector, and

her friend. In possession of that approbation she most appreciated, and that treasure she most prized, Rachel heeded not the passing scene around her in this world's empty space, for her perpetual summer ever smiled while the sunshine of good humour threw its enlivening beams on the countenance of Leonard Morrison.

## CHAPTER XX.

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At the departure of Duncan Campbell from Vine Cottage, which he did not leave without being liberally rewarded for the trouble he had taken on the present occasion, as well as being handsomely paid for all the expences incurred during the time they had taken up their abode at the Falcon Inn, the travellers spent the remainder of the evening in the most cheerful and social converse; after which they retired to the respective apartments that were prepared for them. Nor can it be doubted that they did not partake of that undisturbed repose which none but unvitiated hearts can truly taste of, or ever perfectly enjoy.

The ensuing morning Rachel had full time for her domestic employments, during the absence of Leonard, Adolphus, and Captain Parker, who neglected not to pay their first duty to Captain Montreville, on whom Leonard had promised to call at an early hour to



receive instructions for the necessary arrangements in his commencing negotiations with the Scottish traders. Rachel in the mean time was not idle; she assisted Peggy in all that was necessary to be done previous to the hour of dinner; while Owen acted very tolerably in the part that was allotted to him. Thus things continued for a week, at the end of which time Rachel insisted that Peggy should hire a young female to assist her in the capacity of a servant; to which Peggy would willingly have objected, but Rachel exclaimed,—“ You will displease me greatly Peggy if you do not. I cannot think at your advanced age that you should endure any unnecessary fatigue on my account; I must therefore request that you will immediately employ some person, in order that you may again enjoy the same portion of your time as you did before we came hither. I would not for the world be the means of abridging any of your comforts; on the contrary I would willingly add to them by any service in my power.” Owen was therefore despatched to Duncan Campbell’s with Mrs. Morrison’s compliments to his gude wiffee, requesting her recommendation of a female domestic to attend to the active employment of Vine Cottage; and accordingly the ensuing morning a young woman of a strong and healthful appearance waited on Rachel, and presented a note from Mrs. Campbell, expressed in the following terms.

“ Margaret Campbell has sent a wee bit lassie to Mrs. Morrison, of gude character and discretion; and dinna doubt but she will mak hersel unco useful. Her name is Jeannie; and she is a gude like lassie; is ay minful o’ the sabbath day, and gangs to

ithe kirk when ye sal please to gie her liberty. Sae  
nae mair fra yere loving servant

MARGARET CAMPBELL.

Rachel smiled on perusal of Mrs. Campbell's laconic epistle in favor of the wee bit lassie; but it was not a smile of derision; for it warmed her heart so much that Jeannie was immediately inlisted in her service, her qualifications reported accordingly to Peggy, who very soon gave a satisfactory account of her abilities. And she was permitted to gang to the kirk without the smallest objection being made by Rachel to so laudable a part of her duty.

Many weeks had now glided away imperceptibly beneath the happy roof of Vine Cottage. Leonard and Adolphus having by the recommendation of Captain Montreville established a most respectable connexion with the Scotch merchants, had hired a counting house, where they negotiated a multiplicity of business in the town of Montrose. This was no sooner arranged than Leonard immediately wrote to his father acquainting him with his success. Which so completely intoxicated the old gentleman with joy that, he enclosed him a draft for a considerable amount; bidding him to do what his heart directed towards the future establishment of his friend Walsingham. But the generous Leonard needed not this hint from his father; for Adolphus was already provided for, and made partner with him in all his negociations, during the time he had been in Scotland. Which, in addition to his own unwearied pains and industry, was likely to render the Orphan Boy a man of independant property; exclusive of any emolument he had received from his

generous friend, who refused to take any reimbursement, but entered into a joint concern with him.

We shall at present leave them under the most auspicious and favorable omens warming themselves in the sunshine of domestic and rational enjoyments, and obtaining the reward and gains of honorable industry, while we enter more minutely into an elucidation of those mysterious sorrows, which, to their inexpressible concern, they discovered had so deeply wounded the heart, and agonized the feelings, of their generous friend Captain Montreville; and whose secret cause of latent grief, from motives of delicacy, they had never once presumed to inquire into. And although they had frequent opportunities of visiting the Captain in the town of Montrose, yet never could Rachel prevail on to him to favor them with his company at Vine Cottage,—“Where indeed,” added she with a sweet fascinating smile, “we only want your presence to render us completely happy. Ah! why will you deny Leonard and me the pleasing gratification.”

To which Captain Montreville, with a deep drawn sigh, mournfully replied,—“Dear Mrs. Morrison, if you knew with what pain I refuse your request, you would never again importune me on the subject. That cottage, madam, is in sight of an object, which, at this moment, I could not behold without experiencing a sensation of the most indispensible agony—it commands a view of the Castle of Glencoy. Ah! did but you know the treasure it contains!—and that treasure was once mine. Yes, Mrs. Morrison, the angel who dwells there was once mine! Alas! she will never more be so!—the tie of my fond love is broken—it

was rent asunder by the foul treachery of a base assassin, who murdered my peace for ever!—in long absence he possessed himself of my only love!—when I returned, he had rifled me of all my heart held dear, and had married her! To gain a sight of the idol of my soul I purchased Vine Cottage: and in one of my rambles near the hated residence of Glencoy Castle encountered my most mortal foe—my detested rival lord Glencoy: the husband of her whose vows of love had been plighted to me!—he fell—but not by my hand!—No, eternal Providence be thanked that Montreville has not been the destroyer of Glencoy!—yet is my rival mouldering in the dust; while she I loved is still living.”—

Rachel deeply affected at the relation of Captain Montreville, whose sorrows were of too delicate a nature for her to offer the slightest condolence, remained silent. Though she herself did not consider his situation quite so hopeless as he represented; and when Leonard and she returned to Vine Cottage, her first exclamation was after they were seated,—“Suppose now Leonard that I was the beautiful countess of Glencoy and you were Captain Montreville.—

“Well, my love, what then?” cried Leonard.

“Why,” returned Rachel, “then I should think it very probable that I might marry you.”

“What whether I made you an offer or not?” demanded Leonard, “no, Rachel, I am persuaded that you would not do any such thing. In short, I know not what to think of this mysterious affair; for the agitation of poor Captain Montreville prevented him from being sufficiently explicit on so painful a subject.”

“And the old couple are equally reserved,” continued Rachel, “I could not get a word from Peggy about the bonnie leedy o’ Glencoy Castle, except that, she is still young and excessively beautiful; and incessantly mourns the death of her husband.”

“Yet she is surely not living alone,” cried Adolphus, who had just joined them, “I protest I know not what to think of this mysterious beauty, for do you know that, I have several times encountered her in my walks, and she is always accompanied by a gentleman much older than herself, who has the appearance of being a foreigner of some distinction, who pays her the greatest attention.”

“O you slyboots,” cried Rachel, directing an arch look towards Adolphus, “so you have stolen a march upon us, and have been wandering among the wild heaths on purpose to obtain a peep of the beautiful widow. But have a care Walsingham, gentlemen sometimes pay for peeping.”

Leonard laughed heartily at Rachel’s attack on his friend. While Adolphus without any embarrassment replied,—“You accuse me unfairly Mrs. Morrison, it was by mere accident that I have several times had an opportunity of seeing lady Glencoy. Once in a shower of rain, she and the gentleman whom I have described took shelter in a cottage where I also fled from the shower; and it was the first moment of my beholding her. She was attired in the deepest mourning; and her countenance, though confessedly lovely, was pale and languid; and then I thought bore considerable traces of affliction. I have seen her look better since when I met the carriage on its way to Montrose; in which she was accompanied by the same

gentleman; and the uncommon heat of the weather had made her dispense with the veil which before had overshadowed her lovely features. The carriage stopped at the turnpike, and I confess I was then induced to steal a glance at her."

"There is nothing like a fair and open confession," cried Rachel, now laughing immoderately, "it is preferable to all the disguises in the world. Now if you had protested that you had never looked at her I should not have believed a word of it: and pray Walsingham, what do you think of her?"

"That she is one of the loveliest creatures in existence," answered Adolphus.

"Worthy of such a man as our Captain Montreville," demanded Rachel.

To which Adolphus immediately replied—

"Worthy of any man in the created universe."

He now wished his friend a good night and they retired to their respective chambers.

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## CHAPTER XXI.



The right honorable John Sigismund earl of Glencoy at a youthful period of life became the sole possessor of the wealth of his ancestors; which he was so provident of, as never to be found guilty of one single act of generosity. Benevolent propensities were certainly

not in the catalogue of his lordship's virtues; although for the immediate gratification of an unworthy passion, he would extend the liberality of his purse to the most unheard of and extravagant bounds. He possessed a haughty exterior; with a mind and manners stern and unforgiving; and which he seldom relaxed but when subdued by the charms of female beauty. Then indeed by turns, or as occasion called, he could become the champion, the lover, and the friend. But the object once obtained, these separate characters would instantly vanish, and the coward, the seducer, and the hypocrite be substituted in their stead. Many a village rose, blooming in sweetness and native modesty on its parent tree, had been torn from its protecting branches by his destructive hand; and by his deceptive arts been consigned to an untimely grave. Such was the earl of Glentoy; the man of wealth—the man of power; and such was the husband of Evadne Leburney.

A transient glance caught of a lovely female whom he had seen once, and only once, at an election ball, fixed at last his roving fancy and wholly subdued his heart. Struck with a beautiful modesty that animated a countenance which, for expression and delicacy, he had never seen equalled, he instantly felt inclined to pay devotion at the shrine of such a deity; and lost not a moment in making every inquiry in favor of the resolution he had taken of being introduced to her; being fully determined to possess her either as a wife, or a mistress. But a sensation, to which till now, the earl had been an entire stranger, made him secretly wish she might not belong to that class of females whom he could obtain without difficulty. And this idea assimilating so closely with the inspection he had

taken of the fair incognita that, the infatuated earl, borne on the wings of hope and expectation, posted from place to place, where he thought he could gain the least intelligence of her, but in vain. No one knew her by his description of "the prettiest creature in the world;" and the earl remained inconsolable that day and the day following.

Not having been accustomed to bear the smallest disappointment in the completion of his wishes, he vented all his ill humour on his confidential valet Mr. Alexander Brush, who he despatched to every corner of the village in quest of information; but he made his appearance before his enraged master with as little success as formerly.

The earl now sunk into a state of despondency, from which not even the invigorating powers of campaign could arouse him; and giving up all hopes of ever beholding again the object of his search, gave orders for the carriage, to quit the village of N—— that night. But, before his departure, he resolved to make one more inquiry after his enchantress; which he accordingly did, by rambling more than three miles out of the village; and he might have returned to the inn as wise as he came from it, had not the loud barking of a little spaniel arrested his attention to the spot from whence it proceeded; and he could plainly distinguish voices at no great distance. Impelled by motives of the most resistless curiosity he stopped to listen; and through an opening of the hedge he soon perceived two young ladies in deep conversation; one of them was dressed in the extreme of the fashion; whilst the other was plainly attired, though her shape appeared delicately lovely. He could not see her face



as she wore a large gipsy hat ; but he heard her utter in a tone of the most plaintive sweetness the following words :—“ Confess I love Henry Montreville ? not I indeed ! I am not urged to make any such confession, and it is cruel of you Sophia to request it.”

To which her companion archly replied,—“ And so Evadne, you pretend not to like Henry Montreville, when your blushes at this moment declare to the contrary.”

With much artless expression the former immediately answered,—“ Well then, since you will have it so, there is not a human creature I regard so much as Henry Montreville.”

The moment these words were uttered they quickened their pace, and were receding fast from the earl's view ; but he determined to pursue them ; having just seen and heard enough to convince him that, the same lovely form, the same enchanting voice, existed alone in the beautiful female he had seen at the election.

And recovering from the delirium into which he had been thrown by the sudden appearance of the very object he had so long been in search of, he followed slowly at a distance, to watch at what habitation they should arrive ; nor did he tire in his task till he had fully satisfied himself in the essential points necessary for his attempting to form an acquaintance with the lovely creature who unconsciously had so completely subdued his heart, which was to know whom she belonged to ; where she was going to ; and what was her situation in life.

It is true, the confession he had just heard from her own lips was not very favorable to the passion he had conceived ; and the name of Montreville sounded

somewhat disagreeable in his ears ; but vanity suggested that Montreville was not an earl ;—Montreville might be in want of money—friends—a dependant—younger brother—disbanded officer—poor clergyman—in short, one point he had decidedly settled, that, Montreville should not possess his incognita.

Such were the meditations of the earl when chance, which oft decides the fate of lucky mortals, on the present occasion befriended him, for a post chaise with four unruly horses driving at full speed, and guided by still more unruly drivers, who betrayed every symptom of the most shocking inebriety, so alarmed the ladies that, endeavouring to gain the opposite side of the road, she who had enchanted him ran with such rapidity as to entangle her scarf with some briars, and before her companion had presence of mind to save her, she fell to the ground. Nothing could be more instantaneous than the motion of the earl, who flew towards her, nor the shrieks of her affrighted companion, who, perceiving that she bled violently at the nose exclaimed—“ Oh ! dear sir, I fear she is much hurt.”—She then assisted lord Glencoy in raising her ; but the lady quickly opening eyes which beamed with an expression that was almost celestial, smiled and told them she was certainly more alarmed than hurt ; the sudden force with which she had fallen having alone occasioned the effusion of blood that caused her cousin so much apprehension. She then assured his lordship, who supported her in his arms, that she found herself much recovered, and would no longer be the means of interrupting him in his walks. But the earl had no intention of quitting his fair prize ; the sensations he felt at bearing in his arms the most

delicate form the creator ever gave breath to—the melodious sound of her voice as she timidly whispered her grateful thanks, caused a certain fluttering at his heart which made it impossible to mistake its true emotions, and convinced him that, it was not alone a delicate form, nor a sweet voice, which attracted him so much towards the beautiful Evadne, but a conviction that fortune willed her for his wife. And for the first time lord Glencoy experienced the effect produced in the breast of the most licentious reprobate—respect, at the unaffected display of modesty in a lovely female; and bowing to both the ladies he thus addressed them.—“ I feel it impossible to leave you, and be assured that, the earnest request I make to be permitted the happiness of conducting you safe home, is not produced by any sentiment of idle curiosity; my situation being above disguise, and my name too well known to need investigation.”—He then turned to the sole object who fascinated his attention and exclaimed,—“ We are now two miles from the village, and your walking thither may be attended with some inconvenience, if yourself and the lady will wait in the farm house which does not appear far distant, I will send for my carriage, it is only at the village; and believe me you will honor me by making it of service to you.”

The ladies both thanked him for so obliging an offer but absolutely refused to accept of it; informing him they had not a quarter of a mile to walk; their habitation being only at the foot of the hill.

“ You surely then will permit me to accompany you home,” cried lord Glencoy.

Silent and embarrassed was she for whom alone this service was intended, when her cousin gently reproving

her for being guilty, of rudeness, in return for so much politeness, immediately replied—

“ I am sure my father will be proud to see you, Come Evadne, let us quicken our pace, they will be alarmed at our staying out so late.”

Not one word had escaped the lips of Evadne ; and her confusion was increased by the earl passionately exclaiming, as he pressed her hand within his own,—  
“ I shall estimate this evening, which has afforded me the pleasure of beholding you again, as the happiest of my life.”

Evadne withdrew her hand, and in reply to the earl’s impassioned speech said,—“ I do not recollect sir, ever to have had the honor of seeing you before.”

Lord Glencoy spoke of the election Ball in M——  
“ Where,” cried he, “ I first beheld, you ; and since that day, you have never been absent from my thoughts. Fruitless were my endeavours to gain intelligence where you lived ; and fruitless still had been my search, if the little animal that accompanies you had not caused me impertinently to peep through a hedge, which gave my eyes the sight of heaven, and my ears the music of the spheres.”

Evadne affected not to understand the compliments he addressed to her ; and recollecting that, the conversation which had passed between herself and cousin, thought it very probable that, it might have been overheard by the earl : and from that moment, her natural reserve increased ; for the name of Montreville was, to Evadne, sacred as the pure flame of incense-breathing heaven, buried in the secret recesses of her heart, or only uttered to invoke everlasting blessings on his head.

They now approached a handsome, but ancient looking house, built after the old style, with a portal at the door; and the church, which shewed its white steeple through a clump of trees situated at no great distance from it, caused the earl to suppose it was the parsonage; but, in this he was mistaken, as the door was opened by a smart livery servant; and the young ladies ushered the earl into a very elegant apartment, in which were seated on a sofa an old gentleman, and a lady of a very masculine appearance with a red face; she either was, or had been, indisposed; being carefully wrapped up with flannels. She was in the act of pouring out a dish of coffee when they entered the room, and her countenance expressed some displeasure; when the companion of Evadne skipping up to the old gentlemen, introduced the earl, and related the accident which had befallen her cousin, when his lordship so politely came to their assistance; but he had no sooner cast his eyes on the earl, than he stretched out his hand in the most cordial manner, exclaiming with surprise and pleasure—"My lord Glencoy, I am proud to have the honor of seeing you at my house."

The earl returning his salute, briefly informed him of the trifling service he had been so happy as to render the young ladies, by conducting them safe home; which was more than repaid by the unexpected pleasure of beholding his old friend colonel Bloomfield; whom it was more than ten years since he parted with on the continent; and added, had he known in what part of the globe he had fixed his head quarters, so long a time should not have elapsed, without having paid him a visit.

The colonel again shaking the earl's hand introduced

him to Mrs. and Miss Bloomfield, his wife and daughter; "And that," cried he, pointing to the beautiful Evadne, "is my neice, Miss Le Burney."

"Your neice colonel!" said the earl.

"Yes, my lord, the daughter of my sister," replied the colonel, smiling at the looks of evident satisfaction with which lord Glencoy received this intelligence, although he felt a little mortified at the first admiration with which his lordship surveyed Evadne: as he conceived it alone due to his darling Sophy, of whom he was extravagantly fond.

Mrs. Bloomfield, after reproving the young ladies for staying out so late, which she could not avoid doing though in the presence of the earl, ordered supper and a bedchamber to be prepared for their noble guest with all the ceremony which so short a time would admit of; making a thousand apologies to the earl for not being apprized of his coming; and hoping that he would excuse all the inconveniencies of a country house.

The colonel insisted that he would send for his servants from the inn, and make his house subservient to his pleasure during the time he condescended to remain with them. But the earl assured colonel Bloomfield, that he would only send for his valet; and that he would even dispence with him, rather than the family should be put to the slightest inconvenience on his account. That he had merely come for a ramble through the country, which was esteemed beautiful; and that previous to his accidental meeting with the young ladies, it was his intention to have returned to town that evening; but that now, he certainly would avail himself of his kind invitation to pass a few days in the society of his worthy friend, and that of his charming family.

This hint was sufficient for Mrs. Bloomfield, who had ever made it a general practice to consider what advantages she could derive from being introduced to persons of condition; and here a glorious opportunity presented itself for future aggrandizement, by an acquaintance with lord Glencoy. "The charming family" which he had uttered in terms of such condescension, operated most powerfully in the breast, and on the features of Mrs. Bloomfield. A right honorable taking up his abode in her house, was a circumstance of so flattering a nature, and so truly gratifying to her feelings that, she determined to make the most of it, and set off her "charming family" to the utmost advantage; secretly breathing forth a wish that Sophia, her beautiful Sophia, might appear unusually attractive on this evening. And who knows, thought Mrs. Bloomfield, but his lordship, for lords are as whimsical as other folks, may take a liking to my rosebud as well as to another. Her Sophia a countess—the very thought was giddy rapture; and not knowing exactly what she was about, poor Mrs. Bloomfield gave orders for two additional fowls to be killed and be put down to the spit. Surprised at the order, the cook exclaimed—"Six roast fowls Madam." "Foolish wench," cried Mrs. Bloomfield, "do'nt you know that a lord sups here to night. Can his lordship have too much of a good thing."

Away ran the cook into the poultry yard, seized the hapless fowls that were quietly at roost for the night, and placed them at the fire according to her mistresses directions; and away posted Mrs. Bloomfield to admonish her darling daughter how to conduct herself in the presence of lord Glencoy.

"Had you not better my love change your dress ; and let Smart put your hair to rights," said she, "I vow and protest the wind has blown it about till it looks quite frightful. And pray Sophy, do learn to copy a little of my genteel breeding ; and do'nt let his lordship see what a romp you are, that's a dear sweet girl. There, let Smart bring your last new frock that came from London, and come to supper in it. And be sure Sophy to put the what-d'ye-call'em flowers in your hair," said the fond mother.

"'Tis of no use," said Miss Bloomfield a little pettishly.

"No use," answered Mrs. Bloomfield.

"He is in love with my cousin," retorted Sophia.

"In love with a fiddlestick's end," cried the now enraged Mrs. Bloomfield.

"Had you seen how he squeezed her hand, and with what tenderness he lifted her from the ground," said Sophia.

"She is an impudent, sly, deceitful, baggage," roared out Mrs. Bloomfield, "who is nothing more than a dependant on the charity of your father:—a poor orphan of his fine madam of a sister ; but she shall tramp for it, I warrant me."

To which Miss Sophia immediately retorted,—“I cannot for my life see in Evadne that beauty every body makes such a rout about.”

"Beauty," exclaimed Mrs. Bloomfield, "does she pretend to beauty ? does she presume to put herself on an equality with my child—with the daughter of colonel Bloomfield ?—I shall choak—I shall faint Sophy."

"Pray mama do'nt put yourself in a passion," now



interrupted Miss Bloomfield, "for, really I must say, that it was not Evadne's fault; she was absolutely quite rude to his lordship; and notwithstanding all the fine compliments he paid her, would not answer him a word. I blushed for her."

"She is an insolent little hussey," cried Mrs. Bloomfield, now taking a little breath, "but I don't mean to be troubled with her much longer I promise you. Your father may rave if he pleases, but she shall turn out of Bloomfield Lodge before long I am determined."

Evadne, who had followed Miss Bloomfield out of the room, not choosing to encounter the impassioned glances of lord Glencoy in their absence, and wishing to retire at an early hour for a particular reason, was stealing quietly to her humble lodging, which was almost in an uninhabited part of the house; Mrs. Bloomfield, having thought proper that she should be separate from the rest of the family. But how little did this circumstance affect the mind of Evadne; a mind, on which, the hand of all bounteous heaven had fixed its strongest and fairest impressions. As she passed the door of the apartment in which Mrs. Bloomfield and her daughter were sitting, the last sentence of her irritated aunt caught her ear. Unconscious of having given the slightest cause for her displeasure, and accustomed to bear a frequent repetition of her ill-humour and malignant disposition, yet Evadne was not proof against this unmerited harshness of expression, and she relieved her full heart by a shower of tears. She had no sooner reached her own apartment, the windows of which had been left open, than she found her spirits tolerably tranquillized. The

rising moon reflected its beauteous beams on every surrounding object ; while the perfume of the fragrant flowers, waving to the motion of the softest breeze, sweetened the whole atmosphere. And viewing the serene sky, where every twinkling star proclaimed the glorious work of heaven, she felt her bosom glow with reverence and wonder ; and clasping her hands in grateful admiration of the being who protected her, she piously ejaculated,—“ Gracious heaven ! I adore thy works ! I acknowledge thy bounties and reverence thy everlasting goodness ! Teach me patiently to bear, my lot in life scattered with many a thorn ! Give me fortitude to support adversity ; and courage to bear unshrinkingly the frowns of fate ! Dispose of me ever as thou wilt, the humblest creature of thy will !”

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## CHAPTER XXII.

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May we not suppose that the prayer of Evadne was heard ? did the Orphan ever sue in vain ? or the voice of the daughter of affliction pass through the ear of Divine Providence ? believe me, no. The attribute of Heaven is mercy ; and its sacred dispensations is justice to the injured and defenceless.

Nothing could exceed the chagrin and disappointment of lord Glencoy during supper, which was served up a few minutes after Evadne had retired to

her apartment ; his eyes continually wandered to the door in the hope of seeing her come in, and his conversation with the colonel at last began to grow "stale, flat, and unprofitable." He soon perceived that the beautiful Evadne was by no means a favorite with her relatives, and he determined, in order to effect his future plans and views, to be less ardent in his admiration of her. In vain, however, was the pretty Sophia placed next to him at the table, and her white hands displayed to help him to the most delicate morsels ; and in vain was the officious mother eloquent in praise of the taste and economy of her daughter ; his lordship was even tired of their civilities, and at length began to yawn over the half finished banquet, and complain of fatigue. The colonel rallied him on his want of spirits, called for more wine, made some witty remarks, and began to recount some adventures which had occurred to him in his last campaign, but all to no purpose, for his lordship was not disposed to listen ; in short, he bade them all good night, and was conducted to his chamber by his valet, who had been sent to him from the inn to attend his master.

He was no sooner gone than Mrs. Bloomfield declared she would not give a fig for the company of such lords ; for her part she could not conceive what people could see in them so much to admire, except for their money, and concluded that the earl had not a word to say for himself.

"There verily thou art mistaken, Lucy," said the colonel, "for my lord Glencoy is esteemed a wit. There is no man pays so well, lives more extravagantly, keeps finer horses and dogs ; then his fortune—by the Lord his fortune is immense."

“Why, to be sure,” answered Mrs. Bloomfield, better pleased with the colonel’s observations than she had been with her own, “that makes amends for his want of manners.”

“How so Lucy?” said the colonel.

“How so,” echoed Mrs. Bloomfield, “why, did he eat more than the bare wing of a fowl?—did he touch the ham, nor the custards, nor the jellies, nor the fancy dishes? all my trouble and expence thrown away; and Sophy, my darling Sophy looked upon as nothing, though the dear child was so nicely drest, and looked, as one may say, as if she had come out of a band box; and all because a certain person, who shall be nameless, is flinging out her lures for him: she will find herself mistaken though.”

“Lord mama, why wo’nt you be quiet,” said Sophia, colouring as red as scarlet.”

“I tell you again child,” said Mrs. Bloomfield, “that she wo’nt catch him.”

“What are you both driving at,” said the colonel, “who are you going to catch?”

“Mama is talking of Evadne,” said Sophia.

“Yes, colonel, answered Mrs. Bloomfield, “your pretty niece, Miss Evadne,” flinging down a glass of wine in her rage with her elbows as she threw them across the table, “your meek, modest, demure, sly——

“Will you never let the girl alone,” cried the colonel somewhat displeased, “why do you make me angry Lucy?—can the girl help it because nature has given her a pretty face? fie, Lucy, I am quite ashamed of you.”

“Yes she has a face with a witness,” returned Mrs. Bloomfield.—“The assurance to think she will make

a conquest of a lord!—a pretty thing truly to supplant my Sophy—to hatch a viper—to shelter an ungrateful!——

Here Mrs. Bloomfield was compelled to take breath for she was quite exhausted with passion, when to her surprize and mortification, the colonel burst into an immoderate fit of laughter.

“Go along to bed Lucy for a fool do,” uttered he, do’nt think child my lord Glenroy, great and honorable as he is, would condescend to bestow a thought on either of the girls, much less take it in his head to marry one of them: no, his lordship is not so easily gulled take my word for it. I know my lord Glenroy better: so get along to bed you simpletons do.”

Mrs. Bloomfield was a little cooler, but she would still have inveighed most bitterly against the innocent Evadne had time permitted, but it was now late, the colonel sleepy, and the candles almost burnt out, they thought proper therefore to retire to their apartments, where the drowsy god overpowering all other sensations soon sunk them into a state of forgetfulness.

The object of the lovely Evadne’s affections, Henry Montreville, was the only son of a naval officer, who possessed, on his wife’s side, a trifling income independent of the emolument arising from his professional character. He received from the trembling hand of a dying parent a lovely, accomplished, and amiable female, who having bestowed her hand on the man she loved, lived but to see them happily united ere he closed his eyes for ever. Love, peace, and health were, for a few years, the smiling inmates of captain Montreville and his adored Olivia; when ruthless and inexorable war obliged him unwillingly at last to quit

his peaceful home; to snatch from his agonized though manly breast an almost frantic wife and beauteous boy; Henry Montreville being at that period but five years old.

Oh! fond and faithful love! does thy stream always flow pure and unmixed with life's heart-galling beverage?—No, never!

To the sea of battle captain Montreville went, bravely resolved to conquer or die in the service of his king and country; but, oh! victory too dearly bought!—purchased at too high a price—even with life itself; though crowned with never-fading garlands of truth and loyalty.

The agonies of a distracted wife mourning the loss of her gallant husband, while she bedews with her tears the infant pledge he leaves fatherless behind him, is a circumstance, of all others, the most afflicting to a delicate and feeling soul. For a while grief superseded every other sensation in the widowed heart of Mrs. Montreville, but she was soon recalled to the duties of her situation by the sweet voice of her darling boy, for whose sake she resolved to exert the sway of reason and philosophy, and humbly submit to the rigour of that hand which, while it strikes the blow, administers the balm that time meliorates, and resignation never fails to heal. How oft when fixed in earnest contemplation on the sweet face of young Henry has the fond mother traced the well-remembered features of his lamented father, and she determined to live single for his sake alone; to arrange a plan of the strictest economy by which her son might receive the advantages of a liberal education; and to devote every moment of her life to shelter her opening blossom till it should gather

strength of itself to face the rude blast, and brave the threatening storm.

Never did a mother labour so industriously to pour instruction into the unthinking ear of youth as did Mrs. Montreville ; nor ever was a son so prompt to receive it. At the age of sixteen he surpassed her fondest expectations ; as he possessed all those qualities her ardent imagination had fancied. His person was pleasing and manly ; his mind vigorous and enterprising ; his temper mild, cheerful, and benignant ; his manners were delicate and engaging ; and his heart was the temple of rectitude and honor. Such was Henry Montreville when he occasionally visited the colonel's family ; and was indeed in every respect the careless and happy playmate of Sophia Bloomfield and Evadne Le Burney.

The colonel's house and that of Mrs. Montreville were exactly opposite to each other ; and though they were in fact very good neighbours, yet they had never visited more than by giving one another the salutation of the morning when they passed. This may not appear singular, as the mind and disposition of Mrs. Bloomfield and her accomplished neighbour were by no means congenial. Dancing at the same school, young Montreville had formed an acquaintance with the young ladies ; and as Mrs. Montreville did not consider him of an age to form any attachment of the heart, or receive any dangerous impressions, he was frequently indulged with the society of his young and innocent companions.

Sophia Bloomfield was at this period a fine girl of fourteen years of age, with a remarkable florid complexion and arch blue eyes ; she was possessed of a

neverfailing stock of spirits; and as she was never kept in subjection by her indulgent parents, they were permitted to be called forth on every occasion either to excite mirth, or promote mischief, just as whim, fancy, or caprice directed her. Evadne Le Burney was of a character totally different to her cousin, and but twelve years old; she appeared to have a mind already formed; a delicate sensibility pervaded her features which were cast in nature's most perfect mould; and if any fault could be found in a face so exquisitely beautiful, it was attributed to a mixture of too much pensiveness, which at times overshadowed her countenance; but her form, light and graceful, was lovely in the extreme; her disposition was warm and generous, but her manners reserved even to extreme timidity.

Evadne shrunk like the sensitive plant from the rude attack of effrontery, and mourned like the drooping lily under the pressure of unkindness: which she often endured from her harsh and cruel relation, with a patient humility that did not so much as express itself by a frown nor a murmur; yet would her little heart swell almost to bursting, and unseen by every eye, she would retire to a solitary corner, and relieve herself by shedding torrents of tears.

Thus passed, and thus rolled away, three years, with scarce any visible change in the colonel's family, or that of Mrs. Montreville, when a circumstance took place that, for ever gave birth to love in the unconscious and innocent bosom of Evadne, and the equally spotless and animated breast of Henry Montreville. He had more than once been an eye witness to the unmerited treatment she received from her relations, and often pitied her as she seemed to have nobody to take



her part; and as she had never, though frequently provoked, shed a tear in their presence, nor murmured against their conduct during their absence, he could not avoid admiring, as well as being surprised at, the mildness and sweetness of her character. It is true Henry thought Evadne Le Burney the prettiest girl he had ever seen; that he delighted to join with her in the dance, or catch the soft tone of her melodious voice in a song, was equally true; nay, he had more than once stolen a kiss from her fresh and ruby lips, as they played at blind-man's buff, or sat in a circle round the fire, yet these could naught avail, till convinced by the following incident that, Evadne had taken by surprize the possession of his soul, and would for ever remain engraven there.

On the anniversary of every year it was customary to give a ball to the young ladies and gentlemen of the dancing school by the professor of that accomplishment; and his pupils were regularly invited to partake of a supper, and spend the evening in harmony and innocent mirth. Each little male and female heart fluttered with delight at its approaching celebration, which would gain them the prize presented to the most finished dancer; and afford them an opportunity of decorating their persons to the best advantage, and call forth all their grace and accomplishments on so important an occasion.

On the evening before this so much wished for day, Sophia had testified every symptom of the most violent mirth, and expended whole hours in forming schemes how to rival both in beauty and dress her female competitors. Flowers, feathers, silver, gold, and even jewels were procured by her fond parents to

adorn her person and encrease her vanity, of which she had an abundant share ; whilst a plain muslin frock, fastened with bows of simple white ribbon were to be the only habiliments of the neglected, almost forgotten, but beautiful Evadne.

Henry Montreville had, by a particular appointment, called that evening to take a walk with the young ladies, and after tea they sallied forth, Miss Bloomfield under one arm and Miss Le Burney on the other. Never was evening more delightful or picturesque, the sunbeams yet lingered on the sky, and its departing rays now and then gilded the tops of the lofty mountains, or reflecting its golden image in the limped stream, added to the beauty and richness of the scene ; while the shepherds, driving their flocks from the pastures to the fold, the sound of the distant waterfall, and the melody of the birds, gave birth to contemplations of the most pleasing kind, but they produced different sensations in the breasts of Sophia, Evadne, and Henry. Sophia thought the evening too long, and sighed for the coming morrow. Evadne sighed too, but it was at the sudden exclamation of Henry Montreville, who, looking at his young companions with ineffable delight, pressed the hand of Evadne, whilst an animated blush crimsoned his ingenious countenance : he pronounced—

“ Oh ! my charming friends, may every moment of my life be as replete with felicity as the present, and I shall ask no more.”

Sophia laughed—“ Then I suppose, Mr. Montreville, you never intend to marry,” said she, with an arch expression.

It was an abrupt question, and Montreville was off

his guard ; he still held the hand of all others he most wished to call his own. He looked at Evadne, who blushed excessively, and echoed back the sigh he breathed without daring to utter a single word ; but Sophia was disposed to rally, and she continued to laugh.

“ You do not reply to my question,” uttered she, “ well then, we may conclude you never intend to marry ; but perhaps you have never yet seen her whom you could love ?”

“ Oh ! most assuredly I have,” returned Montreville, much embarrassed, but the provoking Sophia went on.

“ How so, Montreville, she is not present, for if that were the case it must be one of us you know, and positively I do not mean to marry these six years, but dont despair ; perhaps I may relent before that time, especially if I find you a constant swain. Evadne child why dont you speak, are there any hopes for him ?”

The cheeks of Evadne now assumed a deeper red, but she carelessly replied—

“ I have no right, Sophia—I mean I am unequal to the task of deciding on such a subject ; pray don’t ask me.”

Montreville was not pleased ; his very soul seemed to hang on her reply, and he thought it cold in comparison to the warm sensations which from that afternoon he was convinced had taken too deep a root to be easily eradicated.

The subject was changed, and they continued to walk, but Sophia was in a talkative mood ; she adverted to the ball, the dear delightful ball, which would keep

her from sleep the whole of that night and part of the next ; and describing the elegance of her dress, she added with an arch smile, while her blue eyes sparkled with delight, " but pray, Montreville, who will you dance with ; you know you cannot expect to monopolize the whole of the evening."

" What do you mean by monopolize Sophia," said Montreville, surprised.

" Why you do not intend to have me for a partner the whole of the evening, do you" said Miss Bloomfield.

" Believe me no," answered Montreville, " nor do I entertain the smallest idea of it ; for the honour of your hand, Miss Bloomfield, there will be far more worthy competitors than myself, and I should be sorry to deprive them of the triumph they will receive on such an occasion ; though, to use your own words, I do intend to monopolize, and if Miss Le Burney will honour me with her hand, there is not another lady in the village nor in the whole creation, of whom I should feel anxious to solicit a similar favour."

" Well, that is pleasantly settled, upon my word," said Miss Bloomfield, a little piqued, " so you don't like to dance with me, Montreville?"

" Undoubtedly, Sophia," answered Montreville ; " but then to monopolize you know ; to keep others from approaching you would be cruel in the extreme."

" Oh ! you are a provoking creature," cried Miss Bloomfield, " and I will have nothing to say to you. Evadne may take you if she pleases."

" Ah ! but will Evadne accept the proposal?" said Montreville, holding out both his hands to her as they crossed the stile.

Sophia had walked a few paces before, and Montreville uttered this in a tone of inexpressible softness ; and Evadne felt, that to obtain Henry for a partner would be to her a source of delight. On his repeating the question she gave him her hand. " You know, Mr. Montreville, I am fond of dancing, and whenever you have condescended to select me as your partner, I have been happy in the extreme."

Evadne had now said all she dared ; but the delighted Montreville beheld her confusion with a sensation little short of rapture, and he exclaimed—

" Condescend, Evadne, heavenly girl ! the condescension is on your side. " Oh ! if you could but know that when I touch this hand my soul sinks in it, and I"—he hesitated and said no more ; and Evadne ran after her cousin more pleased, more agitated, than she had ever been in her life.

Montreville had never said so much before, and the half finished sentence revealed the situation of his heart ; the sincerity of which she thought it sacrilege to doubt, and recalled her to a close examination of her own. Her reserve, her prudence, and her extreme timidity, had hitherto kept a close watch upon her feelings ; but she found, too sensibly found, that she loved, that she even adored Henry Montreville ; but she would only breathe that secret to the air ; yet had the consciousness of being beloved by him filled her bosom with delight, animated her beautiful countenance, and gave her an unusual glow. As they approached her uncle's house, she imagined every thing in unison with her own feelings, and when the door was opened by her old favourite, Hannah, she affectionately exclaimed, " My dear Hannah, I am so happy."

“God bless you my lovely child” repeated Hannah, it would be a sin if you were not happy, young, innocent, and engaging as you are; and now I think upon it, I hope that God will bless us all, and take pity on your aunt, poor sinful soul, she has met with a sad accident, such a fall.” Evadne waited for no further information, but instantly ran into the parlour, whither she was quickly followed by Montreville and Sophia, where they beheld Mrs. Bloomfield supported on one side by a surgeon, and on the other by the colonel and the kind and friendly Mrs. Montreville, who had flown in to offer her assistance the moment she heard of the accident, and saw the confusion in the colonel’s house. It appears that Mrs. Bloomfield had been giving orders in the kitchen, and in ascending the staircase, by an unlucky motion, fell from the top to the bottom, where she laid to all appearance lifeless till the surgeon arrived. Her left shoulder was found to be much injured by the fall; and she was otherwise dreadfully bruised. She had fainted during the time the surgeon had been preparing the bandages, and was recovering at the moment that Evadne and Sophia entered the room, when she was ordered to be put to bed immediately. The accident being so instantaneous, nothing could exceed the alarm and confusion into which the whole family was thrown. And the colonel, who really doated on his Lucy, though she ruled him with a rod of iron, yet he endured the most tender anxiety; and was apparently much shocked and effected by so unfortunate a circumstance. He expressed himself much obliged by the neighbourly and humane attentions of Mrs. Montreville, who had assisted in putting Mrs. Bloomfield to bed, but finding she could be of

no further use politely took her leave; assuring the colonel, she entertained the most favorable hopes of Mrs. Bloomfield's speedy amendment. To her surprise she found on her return to the parlour another invalid supported in the arms of her son, who was administering drops, while the colonel was calling out in frantic terms on the name of his darling Sophy, and using every means to restore her to a state of sensibility; for Miss Bloomfield upon seeing her mother, had ran screaming into the parlour and fainted from one hysteric fit into another. Thus it is to possess delicate feelings; which rendered the pretty Sophia, on this occasion, the most useless person in the house.

Not so Evadne, who, equally affected, yet had the presence of mind to collect herself, and, Mrs. Montreville excepted, was the most active and assiduous of the family. By the most proper applications she soon restored her cousin to a state of composure; and being informed that, Mrs. Bloomfield though much hurt, was in the most promising way of recovery, she began to discover by a return of her usual spirits that, her apprehensions for her dear mama were not of the most alarming nature. Mrs. Montreville now seeing once more all things likely to produce amendment a second time rose to take leave, offering her son to sit up all night with the colonel; which kind proposal was joyfully accepted of by him; who declared that, if Lucy died that night, he should never survive her. At this moment Evadne entered the room, but seeing Mrs. Montreville in conversation with her uncle, she would have retired had he not desired her to come in. She informed the colonel she had just come from Mrs. Bloomfield, who appeared much relieved from pain; that she had spoken

once or twice to her ; and she intreated his permission that she might sit up all night in the chamber of her aunt. Evadne urged her request with so much affectionate earnestness that, the colonel, looking at her for some moments, drew her towards him, and suddenly exclaimed while he kissed her cheek,—“ Evadne you are a good girl I must need’s say, a very good girl: watch by the side of Lucy! well, I take that extremely kind of you, I do indeed.”

Evadne blushing at the commendation her uncle had bestowed, and which she so seldom received from any part of the family, hastily withdrew ; but she took with her the adoring looks of Montreville, and the admiration of his mother, who was charmed with the unaffected modesty of her deportment, and struck with the uncommon beauty of her countenance.

Mrs. Montreville had never seen Evadne but at a distance, and as her name had seldom been mentioned by her son, she scarce knew that she formed a part of colonel Bloomfield’s family ; but her unexpected appearance to solicit a task that reflected honor to her character, produced sentiments of curiosity, and her being so remarkably lovely, made her anxious to learn on what particular footing she stood in the family. A mother’s eyes are penetrating ; she had remarked a visible alteration in the countenance of her son while the pretty Evadne had been present, and she enquired of the colonel, first glancing slightly at the blushing and conscious Henry,—“ Pray colonel, who is that lovely girl ?”

To which the colonel with some degree of emotion replied :—“ The child, madam, of a dear departed, and most unfortunate sister :”—he paused. wiped a



tear from the corner of his eye, and remained silent ; while young Montreville turned pale, and exhibited anxiety which he in vain attempted to conceal from the observing eye of his mother.

“ I beg pardon colonel,” cried Mrs. Montreville, “ my question may have been an abrupt one, but surely she is one of the most lovely young creatures I think I have ever seen.”

The colonel appeared affected.—“ Yes, madam, cried he, “ and so at one period was her mother : but beauty was the least perfection of my unfortunate sister. She died in giving birth to that girl. Poor, ill-fated, Matilda !—for her child was doomed never to behold its father :—he perished by shipwreck.”

At these words the eyes of Henry Montreville were filled with tears ; he sighed heavily ; and Mrs. Montreville again apologizing for having hit upon a subject so unpleasant wished the colonel good night, and was accompanied as far as the door by her son ; who tenderly pressing his mother’s hand to his lips, softly pronounced,—“ Mother, you have only seen the beauty of Evadne Le Burney ; how would your admiration be increased to find, by a knowledge of her virtues, she is entitled to your esteem.”

Mrs. Montreville looked grave ;—“ I do not approve of ardent friendships,” replied she, “ and on this theme methinks you are unusually eloquent.”

Montreville turned away ; he dared not investigate the nature of his own feelings at the present moment, much less advance an opinion contrary to the judgment of his respected parent, and for a few hours they separated, both equally agitated by different sensations.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

The anxious mother retired to bed, but her mind was too much occupied to permit of her taking repose; her maternal feelings had become alarmed for the safety of her darling son; she felt that nothing would be so inimical to her happiness as a connection with any part of the Colonel's family, and blamed herself as the imprudent cause of having suffered Henry to have been so frequently at the Colonel's house. She now determined to enforce her commands, in order to prevent any further intimacy from taking place, and resolved to put an end to so alarming a circumstance as soon as possible.

It is true Henry had never mentioned Evadne before; but it was equally true he had blushed when she came into the room; that his whole countenance had become animated with pleasure while she was speaking to the Colonel, and that his eyes had followed her to the door with all the admiration and tenderness of an enraptured lover. Then the extreme loveliness of this Evadne; the fascinating sweetness of her voice, and the grace which appeared to accompany every action, again perplexed and alarmed Mrs. Montreville, and she felt that her son's heart was in imminent danger, if not already irrecoverably lost. She ruminated on the warm and susceptible passions of youth, continually in the society and exposed to the sight of so attractive an object as Evadne, and trembled for the consequence.

While these sensations filled and tormented the breast of the fond mother, her delighted son was receiving from the hand he adored a dish of coffee, which she was called from the bedside of her aunt to administer to the Colonel. Sophia Bloomfield, notwithstanding her delicate feelings for her mother, being fast locked in the arms of sleep.

Evadne, in the course of the night, had twice or thrice been the herald of good news to her uncle, that Mrs. Bloomfield had continued every hour to feel more relieved from pain. The Colonel was in rapture, and though he had more than once recruited his spirits with his favourite cordial, brandy and water, made pretty strong, whilst he frequently recounted to Henry a catalogue of the virtues of his dear Lucy, yet towards the morning he felt fatigued and drowsy, and ordered his niece, whom he could not avoid commending much for the care and attention she had shewn in her attendance on Lucy, to make Mr. Montreville and himself a dish of coffee, and also insisted that she should take some with them. Never was repast so delicious as this coffee, prepared by the hand of Evadne; while it was getting ready, Henry found means to steal into the kitchen, and tenderly expressed his fear that she would endanger her health by so much fatigue. She told him she was happy when employed in the task of being serviceable to the family that surrounded her. "For," continued Evadne, "I was never so fortunate as to know my parents, and all that I could ever learn respecting them was, that my poor mother died when she gave me birth, and my father perished by shipwreck on his voyage to a far distant country. To all other questions my uncle has

been ever silent and reserved, and I have long ceased to importune him on so melancholy a subject."

"Oh, Evadne," cried Montreville, "best and gentlest of human beings, pardon me, if I envy the attentions, if I lament the necessity, which exposes you to such fatigue; if I think every hour of your life sacrificed in the society of relations who can be regardless of such exquisite worth and sweetness."

Montreville tenderly pressed her hand to his lips as he uttered these words, whilst affection the most ardent and sincere was impressed on every feature. To escape was now impossible; and Evadne was obliged to listen, when Montreville added,—

"You may be angry Evadne, but you must hear me; and you have too much sincerity not to believe me when I declare I love, I adore you, Evadne. There is not another female on earth will ever make me happy; and now go dearest of girls in the assured conviction that my happiness must ever be affixed to yours."

Silent and confused Evadne heard the confession of Henry without attempting to give him the most distant hope that promised a return; but when he passionately repeated declarations of his regard, she burst into tears, and giving him her hand, generously acknowledged that, he was equally beloved; nor could another object ever fill his station in her heart. Then was Evadne suffered to escape from the trembling hands of the delighted Montreville; she to the bedside of Mrs. Bloomfield, and Henry to his fond, expectant, though greatly agitated mother.

Mrs. Bloomfield opened her eyes as soon as Evadne entered the apartment apparently much mended. The

first question she asked was, where was her darling Sophy."

"Miss Bloomfield is not yet awake," replied Hannah dryly.

"Bless me! then who has been sitting at my bedside the whole of the night," cried Mrs. Bloomfield.

"Miss Evadne," returned Hannah.

"Indeed! and who gave me my medicines?"

"Miss Evadne," again repeated Hannah, "she has never left you a single moment, but to get some coffee for my master and young Mr. Montreville, since you were put to bed."

"Well to be sure that was kind enough," said Mrs. Bloomfield.

She now ordered her pillows to be adjusted, which being done in the gentlest manner possible, she at last beheld Evadne in one corner of the room, leaning with her arm on the table, and thus addressed her.—

## CHAPTER XXIV.

"I find you have been sitting up all night child; I suppose you thought I was dying; and that the colonel your uncle would get a new wife."

So unkind and unmerited an insinuation was too much for the delicate and affectionate Evadne, and she could scarcely restrain her tears while she answer-

ed,—“ No madam, I was far from entertaining any such thoughts; I attend you because, in the first place, I considered it to be my duty; and in the next, I was happy to render any service which might be in my power to bestow; and I rejoice madam, sincerely rejoice that, you are better, though I feel wounded by your reproach.”

The tears of Evadne were now restrained by conscious pride and innocence, and she remained silent. Not so Hannah; who feeling all the indignation she possibly could against her mistress, while every feeling of her honest soul rose in defence of her young favorite, uttered with no small token of her anger,—“ I am rather surprised madam you can put such a wrong meaning on your niece's behaviour, and take no notice of your own daughter's. I am an old servant, and must speak my mind; and you may turn me away if you please; but there's Miss Bloomfield not out of bed yet; never been near you, not she, though last night she thought you were dying; in good earnest, as I am a christian soul, I am quite ashamed of such conduct. Then there is that dear sweet lovely child”—

Hannah would have proceeded, but Mrs. Bloomfield, who could not in her heart approve of Sophia's conduct in the present instance, and expecting that Hannah would express her sentiments yet more freely on the subject, bade her hold her tongue and not fatigue her, saying mildly at the same time, she was not finding fault with Evadne.”

“ Indeed aunt,” cried Evadne, “ I do not deserve it; and would willingly have met with the accident myself a thousand times, rather than you should have endured a moment's pain.”

"There madam," said Hannah exultingly, "there's a jewel of a girl for you! Oh! blessings on her!"

"Hannah you distract my head," said Mrs. Bloomfield; then condescending to smile on Evadne, desired her to go and send her cousin to her. Evadne met Sophia at the door; rubbing her eyes and enquiring how her mama did, she declared she had nothing but the most frightful dreams all night. She then bounced into the room, and kissing her mother, violently expressed her joy at hearing she was so much better by throwing her arms round the colonel's neck, as if she had been a child of two years old.

Joy, we grant, may be expressed in a thousand different ways; some laugh; others possessed of greater sensibility cry; but this not being exactly the case with Sophia Bloomfield, she chose the former, and absolutely burst into a horse laugh at every sentence which was uttered, that an observer would have turned away in disgust at manners which bespoke a mind so little feminine, or delicate.

Any reasonable being would naturally have supposed that, all thoughts of the festivity of a ball would have been totally erased from the mind of an affectionate child by a mother's indisposition, but it happened not to be so with Miss Bloomfield; and during breakfast she broke out as follows:—

"Do you think papa we might venture to go to the ball to-night? mama is so much better; and only think what a disappointment if we remain at home. Every body will be so mortified; beside, it cannot be of any service to mama, our being with her you know: lord I wish Henry Montreville was here, we could settle it so nicely.

The colonel pretended to be very angry:—"Why zounds Sophy!" cried he, "you would not think of going?"

"Indeed but I would though papa, since mama is likely to do so well. Lord now, how can you be so angry."—And Sophia hung round her father's neck; she kissed and she wheedled; and the colonel was presently subdued by her pretty tricks, as he called them; and he promised his darling that, if Lucy had no objection, she should go.

At that moment a servant was announced from Mrs. Montreville to enquire after Mrs. Bloomfield. Sophia jumped up,—“Suppose,” cried she, “I write a bit of a card for Henry to step over to us.”

“Zounds! Sophy, the lad is only just gone to bed; you forget that he has been sitting up the whole of the night,” said the colonel.

“That dont signify papa, I am sure he dont mind that a fig if I send for him,” returned the laughing Sophia.

“Do as you please coaxing slut,” said the fond father, and the giddy girl sat down and wrote a note to Henry, requesting to see him immediately, on an affair of much consequence. The maid servant carried it over and gave it into the hands of her mistress, as Montreville had in fact gone to bed and was not yet risen. Mrs. Montreville very anxiously inquired who she received it from.

One of the young ladies Madam,” replied the girl.

Mrs. Montreville was at a loss what to think; and though addressed to her son, without further scruple opened and read the contents.

“Did not the colonel send me word that Mrs. Bloomfield was better Jane,” cried she.



"Yes, Madam, that I am certain of," answered the servant.

"This is very strange," cried Mrs. Montreville, "and pray can you recollect which of the young ladies you received it from, for there are two you know?"

"Oh, dear! yes Madam, that I can, for one of them is so handsome she is quite a beauty; but it was the other gave me the note; and she said young Mr. Montreville must come over directly, because she wanted him."

Mrs. Montreville being now satisfied that the said note was not from Evadne, went immediately into her son's apartment, who was getting up, and gave it to him, adding at the same time, with a gravity which he had seldom remarked—

"You are the best judge of the meaning of this note, and of course know how to reply to it."

Henry was surprised, and hastily reading the contents, replied, "from Miss Bloomfield, mother,—perhaps Mrs. Bloomfield."

"I will quiet your fears on that head," interrupted Mrs. Montreville. "The colonel informs me she is better. I clearly perceive it is only the young ladies who require your presence."

Montreville, who had never in one single instance given his mother a cause for displeasure, felt extremely hurt at the strangeness of her manner, for which he could in no way account, and instantly followed her.

"For Heaven's sake, my dear mother," cried he, "tell me what is the matter with you; and how I have been so unfortunate to offend."

At which Mrs. Montreville burst into tears.

"Do not ask me at present, I am not well," cried

she, "something does make me uneasy, I confess, but don't ask me now; I beseech you."

You unhappy, mother, and refuse to tell me the cause," exclaimed Henry, his fine eyes rivetted with the fondest affection on the agitated face of the best of mothers, "at least assure me that no part of my conduct has given you uneasiness."

Mrs. Montreville was silent.

"Am I to conclude from your silence mother that, I have rendered you unhappy," said Henry, raising her hands to his lips."

"I am miserable Henry, my peace of mind is gone for ever," said Mrs. Montreville weeping.

"Heavenly powers! and I the cause!" exclaimed Montreville, "dearest mother, be more explicit I implore you!"

Mrs. Montreville felt affected by the affectionate warmth of her son, and the little resentment, or to give it a more proper term, the little jealousy (for even mothers can be jealous) which had crept into her bosom, in one moment subsided; and she threw her arms round his neck and kissed his forehead.—

"Image of my adored Montreville," said she, listen to your mother, who has in this world but one earthly care, one earthly consolation,—need I say that, it is all centred in my son. Answer, therefore, the question I shall ask of you with sincerity; and before you do so, reflect: your mother must not be deceived."

"Have you ever found me guilty of deception," cried Henry, much agitated, and tears starting into his eyes.

"Never my son," replied Mrs. Montreville, I will do you this justice to avow it—no, never.

"Then why suspect me mother," cried Montreville, "why wound me with such unmerited accusations? Here is my heart, open to a mother's examination: probe it deeply; for I would rather that heart bled at every pore than it should cherish, or contain, one sentiment injurious to your repose, or unsanctioned by your wishes."

"You are my son," cried Mrs. Montreville, with the most exulting fondness, "you are the idol of my heart still; and now I can with confidence unfold my alarming apprehensions, and relieve my mind from the burthen by which it is oppressed: yes, I can now disclose my fears, my suspicions, which, I hope are groundless."

"What do you fear, my mother, and what do you suspect?" said Montreville.

"Why then, my son, I was dreadfully alarmed in the apprehension," continued Mrs. Montreville, "that your having been of late so intimate with the family of Colonel Bloomfield might lead to particular circumstances, that your heart might be captivated and your affections ensnared."

"By whom," cried Montreville, now violently agitated.

But Mrs. Montreville smiled.

"So warm, my son; whom then do you suppose I insinuated? There are two young ladies, you know, both pretty and engaging; come, be frank, and inform me which is so happy as to possess your heart."

Poor Henry felt himself completely overpowered; and the passion which triumphed in his heart, and which could only be exterminated with life itself, was now fully evident by its expression on his countenance;

he first turned red, then pale, and at last sank on a chair trembling and embarrassed. This was the climax of his distress, and his mother needed no further conviction to learn the state of his affections.

"Henry," uttered she, "why so distressed? Am I an inflexible judge? or is your mother alone to remain ignorant of what must appear visible to the eyes of every other person? you are in love, my son, and the object of your affection is"—

"Evadne Le Burney," exclaimed Montreville, "Oh, Mother! could you have witnessed, as I have done, for months, the sensibility, the unexampled sweetness and humility of that patient girl. By heaven, mother, I swear to you, had her beauty been her greatest virtue, I should not thus idolize, thus dote upon her; but Evadne is unfortunate; a neglected helpless orphan, and for that I pitied her. She is treated unkindly by her relations, and she bears it all with an unrepining spirit; for that I loved her, and if her mild perfection have penetrated my heart, it is my destiny, and I bow to its decree! Be kind then, Oh! best of mothers and of friends; sanction with your smiles the object of my hearts dearest choice; let not this drooping flower perish in the storm; save it, defend it, from all future harm."

Mrs. Montreville raised her trembling and agitated son to her heart; she wished to disapprove, to start objections, but the fascinating colours in which he had painted Evadne, compelled her to remain silent. The image of the unassuming girl, such as she had seen her the preceding evening, her cheek tinged with the modest blush of diffidence, while she pleaded to sit up with her sick aunt, spoke volumes to the feeling soul,

of Mrs. Montreville, and she now beheld her in imagination at her feet, imploring her to look with love and kindness ; besides Henry, her own darling Henry, loved this girl, and Mrs. Montreville conceived a sympathy towards every human being whom he loved, and on the tablet of her heart she wrote thus :—

“ The maid is beloved by my son. I cannot hate what he loves. I must also extend my affection towards her ; let the hand of destiny do the rest.”

In this way did Mrs. Montreville reconcile matters to herself ; but she resolved in a few weeks to apply herself to a distant relative of her late husband, who had influence in the Navy to provide an establishment for her son, as she totally disapproved of an inactive life, and her small fortune, which she managed with most unexampled economy, precluded the possibility of his remaining long out of employment. These reflections perplexed the mind of the anxious mother.

Alas ! when is paternal love ever at rest ? and in moments like these she felt something like resentment towards the poor girl, whom she considered in some measure a bar to the future plans and views she had formed respecting her son ; but then this would instantly vanish from her mind, and the beautiful form of the innocent Evadne, her speaking eyes, her irresistibly plaintive voice strike forcibly on her heart.

Montreville, soon after the above conversation with his mother, by her desire, went over to the colonel's to demand an explanation of Miss Bloomfield's note. She was sitting alone in the parlour in the midst of her finery, and arranging ornaments for the evening, at which Montreville could not avoid expressing some surprise.

"I presume from these preparations you have not changed your intention of going to the ball," said he.

"Lord! why should I?" replied Sophia, laughing.

"I beg pardon, Miss Bloomfield," returned Montreville, "but I naturally supposed your mother's indisposition would have prevented your partaking of such amusements.

Miss Bloomfield laughed again.

"Really, Mr. Montreville," cried she, "and when you have done with your grave suppositions, perhaps I may inform you that my mother is better. Besides, what good could it possibly do if I was to remain at home?"

"What good Sophia! ask your own heart," replied Montreville, "what benefit a sick mother receives who is cheered by the presence, and soothed by the attentions of an affectionate daughter?"

Sophia secretly piqued still continued to laugh.—  
"You would make an excellent parson Montreville," cried she, "if you could find any body to follow your doctrines; at present there is no one but my sentimental cousin Miss Le Burney who will listen to you: and I shall go to the ball in spite of your sermon. Mama herself insists upon it; she does not require my attendance; for besides Hannah, there will be Evadne to wait on her, and surely that is sufficient.

Montreville's eyes were animated with mingled sensations of pleasure and of approbation.—"Your cousin then, does not accompany you," cried he.

"No," replied Sophia, "she prefers staying at home with mama: how excessively ill bred: at the same time having engaged herself to dance with you. But I always thought her amazingly ridiculous."

This was pronounced with a sneer while she affixed some sparkling ornaments to a white satin hat. But Montreville, remarking it, levelled at her beautiful cousin, whom, it was plain to be perceived, was the object of her envy, would not let her pass unpunished, and with some warmth replied,—“ I am not exactly of your charitable opinion ; never can ridicule be attached to the character of Miss Le Burney, unless, her supplying to your mother the duty of a child, be a mark of her folly. Excellent Evadne ! dear, gentle girl ! in every thing superior !—

Rage and indignation filled the bosom of Miss Bloomfield ; a plume of feathers fell from her hand ; and unable to conceal the contending sensations of pride and mortification, she burst into tears. At this moment her father entered the room. The colonel looked at Montreville, and Montreville at the colonel, but neither seemed inclined to speak ; and the agitation of Sophia increased when, Montreville taking his hat, rose to depart.

“What a devil of a hurry you are in,” cried the colonel, “ but I dare say you will be coming soon enough in the evening, for I suppose Sophy has told you we are going to the ball. But pray good sir, and madam, may I be so bold as to inquire what the plague is the matter with you both ; are you playing at cross purposes ? Sophy, has Montreville found fault with any of your finery ?—disproving your favorite cap ? or what ?—

Sophia was silent ; but Montreville replied,—  
“Montreville, colonel, will always behave to Miss Bloomfield in the way she is best entitled to ; if she

conceives that, I have done otherwise, she is at liberty to chastise me."

"Sophia recovered her agitation in a most surprising manner; she was afraid of appearing ridiculous in the eyes of Montreville, and was equally apprehensive that, if her father persisted to make a further inquiry, the result would not be quite so favorable to her wishes, as Montreville would openly avow his dislike to her going to the ball; while he would applaud Evadne to the skies for a very opposite conduct. Her pretty pouting lips therefore were half opened with a smile, and she extended her fair hand to Montreville as a token of returning good humour. She then assured her father that Montreville and herself were on the best terms imaginable, and hoped that he would join his entreaties with hers in order to induce him to favor them with his company to the ball."

"I thought," cried the colonel, "that was settled, Montreville have you changed your mind?"

Montreville was instantly going to reply that he had, but Evadne, coming into the room, Miss Bloomfield fixed her eyes so earnestly on him that, it brought the deepest colour into his cheeks, and he answered the colonel in a careless and hasty manner that, if it was his wish, he certainly should make a point of going.

Sophia had now gained what she wished; she should now have the handsomest and most elegant young man in the whole village to attend her to the assembly, without the mortification of only sharing his attentions with her cousin; she was delighted; and a pressing invitation to dinner followed the morning's conversation, and ended for the present all further argument, observation, or dispute.



Sophia's blue eyes sparkled with animation, and the roses in her cheeks were heightened by anticipating the pleasures which were to come. Her mouth was dimpled with a thousand smiles ; and might have been aimed with some success at any other heart than Montreville's. But there was another pair of eyes, and he felt the full force of their magic influence, without their sparkling at all. There were cheeks likewise, in which, though the roses bloomed paler, yet they were suffused with the glowing tints of modesty. There was a mouth too—Oh! the prettiest mouth in the world, thought Montreville, as he gazed intently on the face of Miss Le Burney when she sat opposite to him at table. She appeared attentive, but not officious ; humble, but not servile ; intelligent, but not talkative ; timid, though not cowardly ; and, Oh ! strange to say, beautiful, but not vain.

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## CHAPTER XXV.



When a Lady enters an assembly-room so perfectly conscious of the superiority of her charms as to betray itself in every motion ; when it becomes apparent by affected looks of scorn, which she throws on those whom she conceives to be beneath her ; and when it is expressed only by an insolent toss of the

head, or in swimming across the room, Oh ! how unamiable she appears in the eye of discernment, and how disgusting to every lover of true grace and accomplishment.

It happened exactly so with Miss Bloomfield ; with all her splendour of dress, her fine showy figure, and a certain assumption which made her wish to appear something more than she really was, she passed unnoticed by many persons of respectability, whose daughters were present ; and it was only a few pert bred mistresses and ridiculous coxcombs who paid her that homage she expected she had a title to receive. To her partner in the dance all eyes were indeed directed ; and the highest encomiums were lavished on the graceful figure of Henry Montreville, especially by the female part of the company.

In the course of the evening a city banker superbly dressed, and on most exquisite terms with himself solicited the hand of Miss Bloomfield. His head was as empty as his pockets were full poor dear man ; but he was a banker, and that was sufficient. He had got the *stuff*, and that procured him a warm reception wherever he chose to make his appearance. Montreville was easily prevailed upon to yield up his fair partner to this all-conquering hero ; and at the same time was glad to be relieved from the society and affectation of one, from whose conversation he could derive such little pleasure, and was retiring to an inner apartment laid out with refreshments, and in which some of the company had already assembled, when a faint scream from a female of a most lovely countenance directed his attention. Without hesitating a moment he flew to inquire if she was indisposed ; and whether he could

procure her any assistance. She intreated him to conduct her out of the rooms, complained of an excessive pain in her side ; and declared if she remained there she should expire with the agony she endured and the suffocating heat of the rooms. The plaintive solicitation of a female at such a moment was not to be refused ; and two powerful motives drew Montreville's attention towards her, wholly abstracted from her personal charms, for she appeared beautiful ; and independent of the slightest species of gallantry, the first of these motives was compassion, at the state he saw she was reduced to ; and the second, because he perceived her to be neglected by the majority of the company ; and this alone rendered her the object of his delicate attention. After gently supporting her to the first seat that was unoccupied, he flew to procure her a glass of wine ; which, at his pressing intreaty, she attempted to swallow. The perturbation of her spirits increased ; and, at length, covering her face with her hands, she burst into tears.

“ Madam,” cried Montreville, “ pray endeavour to compose your spirits. Of the nature of your agitation I am indeed ignorant, but from whatever source it springs, am equally concerned. You surely cannot be here unattended. Your friends, permit me to seek them ; and when informed of your indisposition, they will certainly convey you home.

Here a deep blush overspread the features of the beautiful stranger ; when she declared she had come to the assembly wholly unattended ; and in terms of the most flattering softness, requested Montreville would conduct her to her aunts house which was in the neighbourhood, where, she assured him, he would be

received in a manner worthy of the polite service he had rendered her.

There was a warmth and animation in her manner, and a sparkling lustre in her eyes, which were every moment rivetted on Montreville with an earnestness that embarrassed and confused him ; and while he was deliberating whether he should accompany her home or not, the colonel, highly offended with his absence, and still more with his apparent indifference to his daughter, now perceiving him, for the first time, deeply engaged in conversation with, as he thought a very pretty girl, saluted him in the following polite terms :—

“ What the devil are you doing there, Harry Montreville ? and what do you mean by deserting my Sophy ? ”

Montreville was confounded ; the lady stared ; and the colonel enjoyed their confusion. But Henry felt it necessary to assure him, that he had quitted Miss Bloomfield merely supposing that his attendance was no longer requisite, if not intrusive, owing to her having expressed a wish to change her partner every two dances.

“ And for my short absence,” continued Montreville, “ the sudden indisposition of this lady must plead my excuse with Miss Bloomfield, who is too kind not to be ”—

“ Excessively displeased with you,” said Miss Bloomfield, who, as she tripped forward with the most lively vivacity, instantly restored the colonel to good humour ; and Montreville was now obliged to take her offered hand. She drew him on one side, and calling forth by the most engaging smiles all the dim-

ples of her arch face, desired he would go down the next dance with her.

Thus without inclination, or being in the least ambitious of the honour which was intended him, was Montreville drawn into a promise he could willingly have relinquished to some more favoured mortal : and on the other hand the lovely stranger again claimed his attention, and to conduct her home was, he thought, only consistent with politeness, and he returned to offer her his protection, when behold the bird was flown ; she had vanished during the few minutes he had been conversing with Sophia ; she flew with rapidity towards the door and disappeared, with such marks of rage and mortification expressed in her countenance, that the colonel, who saw her go, with evident satisfaction burst into a most violent fit of laughter, exclaiming—

“ Curse me, Montreville, but you have settled her ; she’s in a fine fury ; and now I think on it, I am sorry I came to spoil sport, billing and cooing it my boy ; you understand me ?

Sophia now joined the colonel in the laugh at Montreville, who could not avoid expressing his surprise at the sudden flight of the offended fair one, and was about to make some inquiries to know if she had really quitted the room, when he perceived the city banker, who had been dancing with Miss Bloomfield, and the colonel, indulging themselves in laughing at his expense.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Henry Montreville possessed a sweetness of disposition which trifles could not affect, though it frequently exposed him to the unblushing effrontery of others ; as he approached, the smirking city banker asked him, with a self-important grin, if he was well acquainted with the lady who had left the room ?

Montreville coolly replied, that to him she was an entire stranger, nor could even the knowledge of her name be of the slightest consequence.

“ Quiz me but that’s queer, after being so sweet upon her the whole of the evening,” said Banker Traffic.

“ I do not perceive any thing so very extraordinary,” retorted Henry, “ when a lady complains of indisposition, the having offered her my assistance.”

“ Quiz me, but she should have waited till to-morrow morning before I would have offered her mine,” said the banker.

The banker then thought proper to whisper loud enough for every body to hear, while Montreville blushed up to the ears, “ Quiz my dickey, Sir, but she is a kept mistress ;—matter of fact—a certain one eyed old Baronet who visits these parts has her in keeping. Quiz me if it a’nt true ; a true bill, take my word for it.”

Montreville was confused ; never had he addressed a female of that description before ; and Sophia having been attentive to the discourse, and overhearing the

last sentence which the banker uttered with no small degree of malicious satisfaction, he dreaded the full force of her raillery when they got home, not doubting some of her own little embellishments would be added to the incident of the evening ; an occurrence which, however trifling in itself, might be conveyed very differently to the pure ear of Evadne, and he addressed himself to the banker with more earnestness than perhaps the occasion required.

“ The information you have given respecting the lady, Sir, has, I own, surprised me. Had her manner, conversation, or deportment, but once led me to suppose her the character you describe, I should have seen the impropriety of making her an offer of my services ; though my mistaking her for a female of delicate sensibility can never alter my opinion of those who really are so ; or in any shape diminish the respect I think myself bound to treat the whole sex with.”

This serious declaration silenced all raillery, as it was modest and sincere ; and after several more dances the amusement of the evening concluded.

During their drive home the colonel was impatient, and complained of fatigue ; but Sophia declared she could dance much longer without feeling the least inconvenience. Montreville felt equally rejoiced with the colonel at its conclusion. There had been nothing gratifying the whole evening ; nor one individual present with whom he had conversed with any degree of pleasure or animation.

The heart that truly loves feels but an aching void when absent from the object in whom is centered all its hopes ; and wishes, however brilliant the scenes, or gay or alluring the prospects which surrounds us.

The eye is still in search but of one object—the ear to catch the sound but of one voice—and the bosom to receive pleasure but from one source.

Montreville not supposing Miss Le Burney would be up at the late hour they arrived home, or if not gone to bed, concluded she would be confined to Mrs. Bloomfield's apartments, was preparing to bid the colonel good night, or rather good morning, it being then four o'clock, when he heard her voice, and its influence detained him a few minutes longer, in the hope of seeing her, but as she came not, he left the house mentally exclaiming—

“ Evadne, purest and gentlest of beings ! how superior art thou when compared to thy thoughtless cousin ; thou in the exercise of every virtue hoverest round the bed of sickness, and personified the true character of an administering angel. She forgetting the duties of humanity, flies eagerly in the pursuit of pleasure, and to that sacrifices the sweetest of all human sensations, filial love.”

When Henry met his mother at breakfast time, he perceived an unusual expression on her countenance, and that something had occurred in his short absence to give rise to it. After some general conversation, taking a letter from her pocket with considerable emotion, she desired him to peruse its contents, which were as follows :—

“ MADAM—I am honoured with yours, and in reply can only assure you how sincerely happy I consider myself in being favoured with your commands.

“ The intimacy which subsisted between myself and your excellent husband, Captain Henry Montreville,



must, while memory remains, claim my dearest remembrance; and the recollection of his manly worth long live in my grateful heart.

“ You may then in truth, madam, command my services, without the apology you have thought it necessary to make for having troubled me. I can never deem that a trouble which will, in any degree, prove beneficial to the respected wife of my most regretted friend. Is it requisite to inform you that his son will be equally dear? I shall be proud to receive him from your hands; to become his protector, his counsellor and friend; in the sacred discharge of which duties I shall be more than amply repaid, if he will be disposed to receive me as such.

“ My ship being under sailing orders, I could wish to prepare you for an abrupt departure; but your philosophy must all be exerted on the occasion, and the tenderness of your maternal feelings yield to the future establishment of your son. If any mitigation can be offered to lessen the pangs of separation, permit me to hope it will be from the assured conviction, that under my protection he will command all the attention that an old weather-beaten sailor, and the devoted friend of his ever-to-be-lamented father can bestow. More the fullness of my heart prevents me from expressing in the manner I could wish. Have the goodness, therefore, Madam, to conclude me among the number of your sincere friends,

“ GEORGE WILLIAM NELSON,

“ Admiral on board his Majesty's ship

“ *The Royal Sovereign.*”

“ *To Mrs. Montreville.*”

Long before Montreville had concluded reading the letter, his countenance had undergone many changes, and in returning it to his mother he trembled and turned pale.

Though she had in frequent conversations with him mentioned Admiral Nelson as being the friend of his late father, and often declared she wished to place him under his protection, in order to promote his interest in a Naval establishment, yet to account for this, her so sudden determination, he could not. That she was the tenderest of mothers his heart acknowledged ; but at this juncture to be torn from the object of his early love ; to quit Elvaine seemed a pang of all others insupportable, and he felt himself unable to utter a single word.

Mrs. Montreville, perceiving his agitation, now addressed him ; but her faltering voice, tenderly softened by affection, discovered the emotion she was vainly endeavouring to repress.

“ Henry, I believe you are convinced that I deeply partake in your feelings on the present occasion, and that I live but to promote the interest of my son. When I lost your father, it was to me the climax of all earthly afflictions, and in the frenzy of my grief I prayed for death, that my spirit might be re-united to his in a better world. Your voice, my child ; you, the image of my lost Montreville, recalled me back to life ; your caresses was the cordial which revived my widowed heart. I breathed but in your infant smiles ; and when time had in some degree mitigated my sufferings, I found in you my only consolation, my sole-surviving hope. With what anxious care have I watched over my treasure, and how often as you slept,

unconsciously of a wretched mother's grief, have my tears bedewed your pillow."

"Oh, mother! best of mothers!" exclaimed Montreville; and Mrs. Montreville continued—

"And well have you repaid my cares from infancy to the present period; you have been my comfort, my pride; continue then to prove so, my beloved child. The world now lies before you, cull then its flowers; embitter not yourself with its thorns; seize the present moment, accept the friendship of the worthy admiral, and under his auspices become what your fond mother is anxious you should be,—your King's devoted subject, and the pride and glory of your country."

"The tears now fell fast and without restraint from Mrs. Montreville, nor was Henry himself less affected; he hid his face with his handkerchief, and in a voice scarcely audible pronounced "Evadne."

"Will submit to a separation which is unavoidable," said Mrs. Montreville. "Am I not your mother? Can her sufferings exceed mine? Oh! doubt not, my son, but that lovely girl will gladly part with you when she considers that your future prospects in life depends on your going. An attachment of the heart, when too early formed, my Henry, often produces whole years of disquietude. Oh! my son, I cannot tell you half the sorrow and repentance which it will lead to; beware then of its destructive influence; rest not your hopes too firmly on its basis; often visionary—too surely deceitful."

"Oh! say not so, dearest mother!" exclaimed Montreville, "call not my attachment to Evadne a crime; say not that our love will be replete with sor-

row—with repentance. If so, ~~what~~ then will be the fate of Montreville, and what the destiny of Evadne?"

"Heaven alone can tell!" ejaculated Mrs. Montreville; and fixing her eyes with piercing expression on Montreville, in a voice solemnly affecting, continued—

"Henry, I command you to hear me; are you willing to follow a mother's counsel; or, lost in the delirium of love, suffer your youthful heart to seek its own destruction? Must Evadne be your fate! Yes, I see it but too plainly; you would sacrifice to her your dearest interests—your life"—

"Would be valueless without her," exclaimed the agitated Henry; "but you, my mother, you are the first object to whom my duty bends. I am yours; bless with your sanction my affection for that angelic girl; give me now some hope, some cherished hope, that I may one day call her mine, and hereafter dispose of me as you please."

Henry was now at the feet of his mother. He clasped her hand—he bathed it with his tears—he implored her to speak to him.

Mrs. Montreville was overcome. The idol of her heart was kneeling before her, and though his union with colonel Bloomfield's niece was perhaps the last wish of her soul, her views extending somewhat higher, yet to his entreaties she could now refuse nothing; he had given her his promise that he would act consistent with her hopes, and in return he demanded she should not withhold her consent to his marriage with Evadne, should fortune one day favour the event.

Both mother and son being now a little more calm.

they found themselves able to converse with less agitation on the period when he should join the admiral's ship, then lying off Plymouth, to which place Mrs. Montreville had determined to accompany him, a distant relative residing there having given her a pressing invitation to pass some months at Thorn House, a beautiful villa, most delightfully situated on the banks of the Devon.

Things being thus arranged between Montreville and his mother, and the time of their departure being fixed upon, he retired to his own apartment, where he could freely indulge in those sensations, which, in the presence of Mrs. Montreville, he found it necessary to restrain. To part with Evadne, whom he resolved not to see till the evening previous to his going away, was now the only, but the hardest, task which remained.

Two or three days had now elapsed since he had called at the colonel's house; nor had he once seen Evadne since Mrs. Bloomfield (who was now so far recovered from her indisposition as to be able to quit her chamber, and scold her servants as usual) had been confined. Every moment had he been on the point of going over, but while he continued so agitated Mrs. Montreville would not permit him; dreading lest the sight of Evadne would totally overpower him: that her beauty and resistless pleadings might weaken all his resolutions, subdue his courage, and entirely work a change in those sentiments, she had been at such pains to persuade him to adopt. Here her penetrating judgment was right; for had the timid Evadne all lovely and artless as she was, declared to Montreville, she could not support the pangs of separation, where would have been the philosophy of Henry; and

where his promise to his mother. With considerable difficulty he had coaxed her to give him a miniature picture he had sat for a few months back, and which he now enclosing in a packet containing the most animated and eloquently written declarations of his love, determined to give Evadne that evening; the last perhaps that he should ever more behold her. Never more behold Evadne!—the thought was madness: and taking his hat, he rushed out of the house, and found himself at the colonel's door, wholly abstracted by melancholy reflections, and quite unprepared for the meeting he so much dreaded to encounter. Hannah met him at the door, and telling him that a certain person was in her own apartment, and would be glad to see him she was sure, dropped a most respectful courtesy.

“So Miss Le Burney then is alone my good Hannah,” said Montreville.

“And she is like to be sweet soul,” replied Hannah, “for nobody takes much notice of her in this house, that's for certain; though to be sure we have got no less than a great lord below in the parlour. My old mistress in such a fluster, do'nt think the ground good enough for him to walk upon; the whole house is turned topsyturvy on his account: why sir, a christian soul a'nt patience to bear it; for, as I said before, what is a lord but a man. But dear Mr. Henry, I humbly beg your pardon, here stand I talking, and you are so good as to listen to me, when I know you would rather be somewhere else. Come sir, I'll let you in; here is the key; and there you will find the sweet bird caged; dare not stir without Madam and Miss chooses. Oh! that I was but a handsome young man like you, that's

all : I say no more : but a christian soul a'nt patience to bear it."

Had not Montreville made the best of his way to Evadne's apartment, it is probable that Hannah would have run on till dooms-day, having got on her most favorite theme. She had loved Evadne from a child; her infantine beauty, sweetness of disposition, and innocent caresses had crept into the warmest corner of Hannah's heart; and she beheld the loves of Evadne and Henry with approving smiles; often frowned with indignation at the unmerited treatment she received, and shook her head at Mrs. Bloomfield; and was frequently heard to make comparisons between the unassuming loveliness of Miss Le Burney and the pert, forward, and affected airs of Sophia Bloomfield.

Evadne perceived not Montreville stealing into the room, as she was engaged with reading; and he had placed himself at the back of her chair, where he continued for several minutes to gaze on a countenance, the beautiful expression of which, resembled a mild Madona's. Arriving at a particular passage, she read aloud the following delicate lines of Juliet, when she is met by Romeo and the friar on the evening of her marriage :—

"Conceit, more rich in matter than in words,  
Bragg of his substance, not of ornament :—  
They are but beggars that can count their worth :  
But my true love is grown to such excess,  
I cannot sum up one half of all my wealth."

Montreville now interrupted her, and rallying her on the subject she had chosen, called her his beautiful Juliet. But his smiles were forced, and he had no

sooner taken her hand, than his pale and melancholy countenance discovered his emotion and the state of his feelings, which, Evadne observing, he thus addressed her :

“ I am come Evadne,” said Montreville, a deep gloom overspreading his fine features, “ I am come Evadne, to inform you of the necessity, I must ever call it cruel, which obliges me to leave you for a short time ; and were it not to secure independence to the most affectionate of mothers, to place far from the reach of poverty the best of parents and of friends, no earthly power should tear me from you ; not even your unkind relations should deprive me of the hope of calling you mine for ever. But now I go in the assured conviction ——”

“ That I shall cease to exist without you,” exclaimed Evadne, struck to the heart by this unexpected intelligence, “ Oh ! Montreville, wherefore do you leave me ? When you are gone, is there a being who will regard the unfortunate Evadne ?”

“ Yes, that being who protects us all,” said Montreville, deeply affected by her tears, which she could not restrain, “ let not your tears then, Oh ! beloved of my soul, add to my present sufferings ; they afflict me, Evadne beyond the power of utterance. Oh ! do not give way to this excess of grief, or you will compel me to revoke my promise given to my mother : I cannot bear to see you weep.”

Evadne sunk into the trembling arms which were open to receive her ; she dried her own tears, and afterwards those which stole unconsciously down the face of Montreville, while she exerted every faculty to call back her fleeting spirits and convince him that, in



a trial so severe, she was possessed of courage and fortitude. She even attempted to smile as she related to him the occurrence of the evening, but stopped suddenly on perceiving the countenance of Henry become pale and agitated. "What ails Montreville? Oh! tell me," cried Evadne.

"I will not attempt to conceal my feelings," answered Montreville, "nor the alarm you have thrown me into. Heavens! should this earl—your youth, your beauty, your inexperience—Evadne! it is, it must be so—you will be torn from my arms, you will be made the sacrifice of unjust, treacherous, and sordid relations. Oh! rather let me die a thousand deaths, and be spared this torture!"

Evadne sunk on her knees before her agonized and trembling lover. She invoked the interposing hand of Providence to secure her from the evils he had described, and swore by the bright planets which then surrounded them, that she would only be the wife of Montreville. She pledged her faith a thousand and a thousand times to this dear idol of her affections, and called Heaven to witness the sacred bond which passed between them.

What need of words to paint the anguish, to express the fears and hopes of parting lovers. 'Tis a combination of tears and smiles, of pleasure and pain so sweetly blended, that neither can be found to be predominant. 'Twas indeed long after the lark had carolled her sweet song to greet the rising morning, that Montreville bade a long adieu to Evadne, each having passed vows of eternal fidelity and unalterable affection, never to be broken, never to be forgotten.





**Founded on Facts.**

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THE  
**ORPHAN BOY,**

OR

**TEST OF INNOCENCE.**

By

**MRS. CATHERINE G. WARD,**

AUTHORESS OF

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"Daughter of St. Omer;" "Sacred Deposit;" "Bachelor's Heiress;"  
"Robertina;" "Poems;" &c. &c. &c. &c.

**VOL. II.**

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Not yours, nor mine alone!  
A friendless Orphan Boy!"

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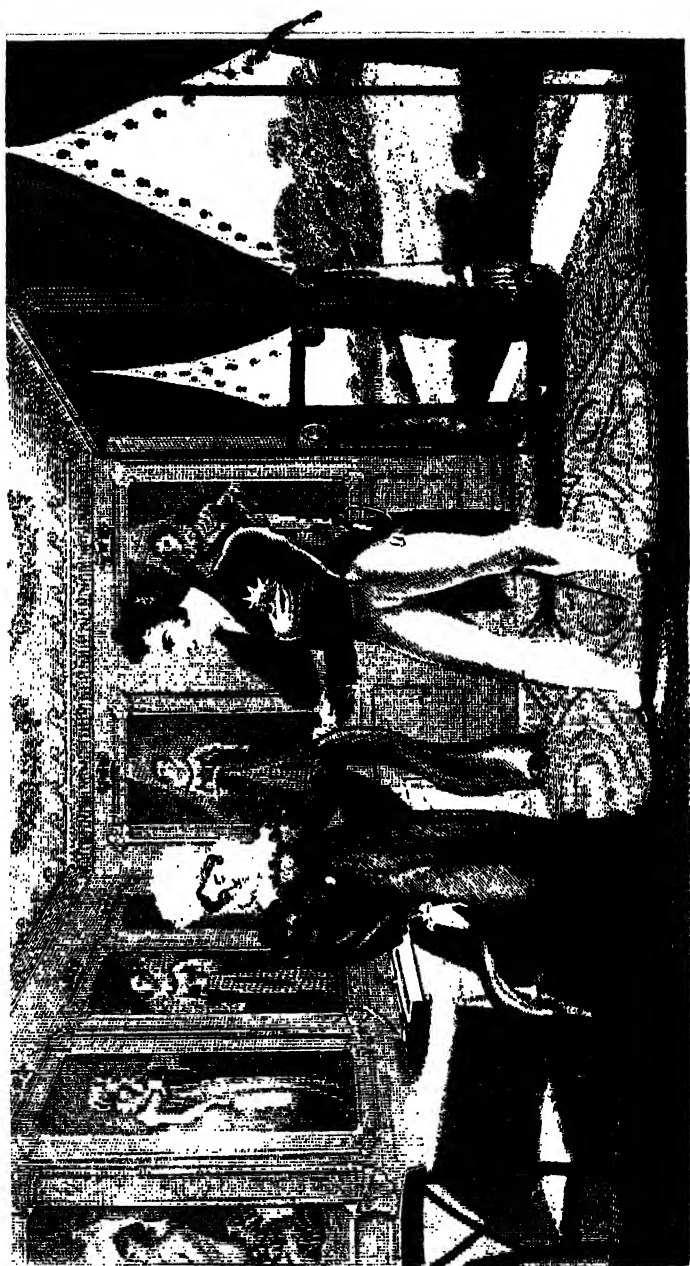
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## CHAPTER XXVII.

Evadne passed the night in tears, at least from the hour that Montreville had quitted her till the clock had struck nine. From her window she watched the receding steps of Montreville, and when she could no longer behold him, all the fortitude which, in his presence had supported her, entirely fled, and her convulsive sobs were heard by Hannah, who coming into the room, by every means strove to calm her agitated spirits. Poor Evadne had no friendly bosom in the world open to receive her griefs, or to whom she could impart her sufferings, but Hannah. There was besides a timid reserve in her character, which nothing but the present state of her feelings would have permitted her to break through, and a little cheered by the kindness of Hannah, she endeavoured to reconcile herself to the severity of her fate, in the ardent hope that Montreville would one day return and claim her for his wife.

We shall now return to lord Glenroy and the family party in the parlour, all endeavouring to pay him the most obsequious attention ; and must observe, that it was only the evening before he encountered the young ladies in their walk, that Mrs. Bloomfield had been able to leave her room to transact her domestic concerns. Sophia had dragged Evadne out that afternoon for a walk, declaring that she should die of *cannai* if she was obliged to be penned up in the house like a sheep in the fold.



The conversation which passed between the two ladies, and their accidentally meeting with lord Glenroy has already been related ; likewise his lordship's disquietude at the non-appearance of Evadne at the supper table. The next morning, however, when his lordship came down stairs to breakfast, the first person his eyes encountered was the fine graceful figure of Henry Montreville, who, with affectionate warmth, was then pressing the colonel's hand, and bidding adieu to the rest of the family ; all but Evadne was present. A slight introduction having taken place between himself and the earl, and a formal bow being exchanged on both sides, he again wished them farewell, and was leaving the room, when Sophia, in a sarcastic tone, enquired if he had taken leave of Miss Le Burney ?

Lord Glenroy fixed his dark and penetrating eyes on Montreville, while with animated warmth he replied to her rude and abrupt interrogatory.

" You cannot suppose me, madam, wanting so much in recollection as to have left the house and not have seen Miss Le Burney. I must indeed be ungrateful to forget that lady or any part of the colonel's family, whom I think entitled to my highest respect and warmest gratitude."

So saying Montreville quitted the room ; but his agitation was visible in the last words he had uttered to all present ; and the colonel, with whom he had been a favourite, could not remark his dejection without betraying some little concern ; for a few minutes after he had left the room a general silence ensued ; which Mrs. Bloomfield at last broke by the following observation :—

“ Well, I vow and protest I feel somehow quite comical. That boy has been so much about our house ; and the colonel has been so vastly good as to give him some instructions, and make him such a pretty behaved youth, that, you know, my lord, one can’t help feeling a little sorry at his going. To be sure, his mother, poor woman, her affairs, my lord——”

Here the colonel, with a significant wink, thought proper to interrupt his darling Lucy ; well knowing that, when once she began to talk, and talk of other people’s affairs, she often added a few of her own little embellishments. But his lordship curious to learn something more of the history of an object whom, now he had once seen, he detested, not only for the attractive graces of his person, but for being his rival in the affections of Evadne, carelessly demanded of the loquacious Mrs. Bloomfield what profession the young man was of. At which, proud of being interrogated by so great a man, she began to inform his lordship, from beginning to end, all she knew, and all she did not know of Mrs. Montreville and her family affairs, concluding, “ that for a person who had so little to do with she was the proudest woman that ever walked ; that she valued herself chiefly upon her fine scholarship and such like ; and that for her part, she wondered what such sort of people had to meddle with learning at all for, they were always the poorer for it. She thanked God, she had never been taught a bit of that kind of learning in her life. Reading plays and poetry was a parcel of nonsense ; she never troubled her head with such stuff, not she. She could read the bible ; write her own name ; and cast up accounts ; and that, in her opinion, was learning sufficient.”

"Plato thou reasonest well," thought lord Glenroy, with difficulty stifling a laugh; but the poor colonel began to sit very uneasy on his chair; and Sophia turned as red as scarlet; as they soon perceived his lordship was at some extraordinary pains to conceal his uncommon propensity to laughter. But so utterly blind are we to our own faults that, Mrs. Bloomfield still continued to run on in her usual style till called out upon some domestic concerns; when the colonel proposed that they should take a ride; to which his lordship replied, he could have no objection, provided the ladies would accompany them.

"Will you go Sophy," cried the colonel.

"You know papa, that I cannot endure to ride on horseback," replied Miss Bloomfield.

"But my bārouche is at your service," said lord Glenroy, "and, indeed, I should recommend it, as by far the most pleasant, the weather being so excessively warm. Permit me to desire that it may be got in readiness."

The delighted Sophia courtesying her assent, flew to make some alteration in her dress; and his lordship to give directions to his servants.

Evadne, drest with the simplest neatness, a plain muslin cap on her head, though pale as a beautiful lily, appeared to lord Glenroy the most attractive object in the world. And with looks expressive of his admiration he requested she would honor him with her company in their morning ride; but she excused herself by informing him that, her attendance at home was indispensibly necessary, at the same time that she pleaded indisposition, which was but too visible in her countenance.

His lordship expressed his deepest concern ; and assuming a tone of the most insinuating softness, told her that, her absence was the greatest punishment he could receive ; since, for her sake alone, he continued to be the colonel's guest ; and entreated that she would bless him with her presence at dinner. He then passionately seized her hand, which Evadne snatching from him, and colouring deeply with resentment, withdrew.

At this moment Sophia Bloomfield, with lace enough on her dress, and flowers on her bonnet, sufficient to have stocked a milliner's shop, flounced into the parlour, having just got a glance of Evadne and his lordship as she passed ; and the colonel being now equipped, and the barouche at the door, Mrs. Bloomfield bustled up stairs quite in time to see lord Glenroy hand Sophia into it, who was followed by the colonel ; and as it drove from the door, she exclaimed with no small vivacity,—

“ Well, I vow and protest, I never saw my Sophy look so handsome before ; she does become a carriage, that for certain. Oh ! she is a noble girl ; is not she Handy ? ”

“ That she is for sarten ma'am,” returned Mrs. Handy, who had long been a confidential domestic of Mrs. Bloomfield's, “ she would make two of Miss Vadney. Oh ! what a sweet figur Miss Sophy is. Lauk ma'am, she is as like you as two peas in a pod.”

Mrs. Bloomfield adjusted her doublebordered French lace cap, and smoothed down a spotted poplin dress which she had just put on, on the strength of this observation ; while she replied to Mrs. Handy with a smirking smile—

"Why, yea, Handy, Sophy does take after me, that is certain, for, though I say it that should not say it, when I was a young woman, I had a colour like a crimson rose."

"Lauk ma'am, how pretty," simpered Mrs. Handy.

"And then Handy," returned Mrs. Bloomfield, "I was round as a pudding, and plump as a partridge."

"O yes, I dares to say, you was quite a beauty ma'am," returned Handy.

"I was thought so Handy," answered Mrs. Bloomfield, "and beauty they say is fancy."

"To be sure ma'am, that's what I always says," replied Mrs. Handy, "to our sarvants when they talk so much about Miss Vadney. There's Dick says there an't her equal in the universal world. And there's old Hannah wows and purtests that as how she is the most beautifulest creter that walks upon christian ground, And then ma'am, I tries to argufy with them, but its of no mortal sarvice."

"Hannah is an old fool for her pains," cried Mrs. Bloomfield, "no Handy, you are the best judge of beauty in this house. And there's another person who shall be nameless, that knows a silk purse from a sow's ear I warrant me."

Having concluded with this very elegant simile Mrs. Bloomfield walked up stairs to put another finish to her dress accompanied by the accommodating Mrs. Handy; where we will leave them for the present, and return to the little party in the barouche.

There is something so sweet in the breath of a summer's morning that, we must be out of humour with ourselves, or under the pressure of some heavy calamity, when we do not admire its beauties, nor feel the

influence of its charms. Alas! so guided are human beings by circumstances and situation that, when the heart is comfortless, unheeded blooms the rose, and unregarded blows the lily. Nature's richest prospects then yield no delight; and the vacant eye wanders over boundless tracts of land without being once gratified by the surrounding objects which it displays. In vain did the colonel expatiate on the beauty of the country and the fineness of the weather; and in vain did Sophia call forth a thousand little arts to attract lord Glenroy's attention towards her. One moment complaining of the heat, she threw aside her silk scarf, discovering through the thin folds of a very transparent drapery, her white bosom; the next, as if by accident, she would drop her glove, and, endeavouring to recover it, exhibit a very fine shaped hand and arm. Her auburn tresses too were suffered to wave with the wanton wind; and her gipsy bonnet taken off, to give a more perfect view of a face, which owed its principal charm to a fresh and remarkably rosy complexion.

Insensible Glenroy! where was thy penetration, not to discover its wondrous beauties, its amazing expression. To do him ample justice, his lordship was at this particular juncture insufferably blind, and wholly absorbed in contemplations of a very different nature; the beauty of Sophia (for that she had beauty could not be doubted) was totally overlooked, and that of her cousin, the despised, the neglected Evadne, was the subject of his thoughts, of his most ardent admiration. Determined to possess her, and possess her for a wife, he planned a thousand schemes of ideal happiness; and fully assured that, the overtures he intended to make would be too flattering and liberal

to be rejected, he resolved to address the colonel that very evening on the subject, and partly by costly presents to his family, and partly by flattery, to win them over to his side.

It is true the vanity of Sophia would receive an unexpected check, and the ridiculous pride of her mother be completely mortified by the offer of his hand and fortune to a creature whose superior attractions rendered her the object of their envy. But were these considerations to be weighed to the possession of so lovely a girl as Evadne Le Burney; whose enchanting modesty, and whose excessive reserve but added strength to the passion by which he was inspired; and wrapped in these reflections his lordship heard not the exclamation of Miss Bloomfield as they again reached the colonel's habitation.

"Good heavens, papa, why do'nt you wake his lordship, I am sure that he must be fast asleep."

Lord Glenroy's eyes were indeed half closed, but his imagination and his thoughts were never more lively, or animated; and as he assisted Sophia from the carriage, he pressed her hand to his lips, while he demanded with a warmth which added to the roses of her complexion, if she still continued to suppose him to be asleep.

They immediately retired to their respective apartments to dress for dinner; where we will leave them to make what alterations they please till the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

The dinner being announced and served up in a style, as Mrs. Bloomfield thought, of superior excellence, the parties assembled. Lord Glenroy, the Colonel, Mrs. Bloomfield, Sophia, who had changed her dress for one more fantastic and alluring, and last of all Evadne in plain white, her beautiful dark hair neatly braided, and her slender waist confined with a riband of the palest lilac. Thus modestly attired she took her seat at the lower end of the table ; but her pale countenance and dejected manner did not wholly escape the observation of her uncle, who during dinner inquired if she was not well.

“ Not very well sir,” was her reply ; but Mrs. Bloomfield perceiving that his lordship’s eyes were more frequently directed towards her than she imagined there could be any occasion for, maliciously remarked that, when young ladies had lost their sweethearts it was natural for them to complain. The colonel laughed ; Miss Sophia tittered, and looked, his lordship thought, very ill-natured ; whilst Evadne, still growing more pale and agitated, could hardly refrain from shedding tears.

Had their insidious remarks glanced at any other object than Henry Montreville, his lordship felt he could not long have been a silent witness of such unmerited severity towards the only object on earth whom he now loved ; but the agitation she discovered at the mention of that hated name, kept him sullenly



silent; and they continued to torment her by observations which they knew would be likely to hurt her delicacy and wound her feelings. At length, totally overcome, she burst into tears and quitted the room; it was then that the earl felt resentment kindling in his breast against the whole party; and his frowns soon betrayed his intention, as he addressed the colonel with some asperity:—

“ You have informed me, sir, that young lady is your neice; to me she appears the most gentle, the most unoffending being in the world; and you must pardon me when I observe that, I cannot help thinking the severity used towards her, and which I have just been a witness of, extremely unjust, if not unpardonable.”

Mrs. Bloomfield now bridled up,—

“ Then I must inform your lordship that, you are quite deceived in that girl,” said she, “ she is the greatest vixen in the world, for all she looks so sly and demure.”

“ I am sorry madam,” returned his lordship very coldly, “ that I cannot credit your assertion.”

“ Hold your tongue Lucy,” cried the colonel, “ and let the girl alone.”

“ I won’t colonel,” said Mrs. Bloomfield, whose passion, not even the presence of his lordship could restrain, “ I won’t colonel, and that’s flat.”

“ For shame Lucy,” cried the colonel.

“ No shame at all,” returned the enraged Mrs. Bloomfield “ shame indeed, the shame is on your side; for bringing her into your family to breed disturbances and I have a great mind to turn the insolent hussey out of my doors.”

“Then, madam, she shall find a shelter in mine!” replied lord Glenroy with great warmth to the astonished Mrs. Bloomfield, the equally surprised Sophia, and the almost petrified colonel.

The earl now rose with a great deal of displeasure from the table, and telling the colonel he requested an hour’s audience in private with him, bowed to the ladies and quitted the room; leaving the astonished party to make what comments they pleased on his defence of Evadne.

The door was no sooner closed than Mrs. Bloomfield broke out into the following exclamation:—

“Good Heaven deliver us!”

“The next time, Lucy, I hope you’ll learn to keep your tongue within your teeth; how could you think of expressing yourself in the manner you have done?” said the colonel. And what do you suppose we shall get by it? His lordship is certainly in love with the girl, over head and ears, cannot you see that?”

“And I dare say will be fool enough to marry her,” observed Miss Sophia, biting her pretty pouting lips with mere vexation.

“And make a countess of her! Oh dear! for certain my poor heart will break,” said Mrs. Bloomfield, and took out her handkerchief and wept.

The mortified Sophia, following her mother’s example, a crying duet commenced, which not being much to the satisfaction of the colonel, he swallowed off a large glass of brandy and water in order to recruit his spirits, and persuading his helpmate to take a little of the same mixture, in words of the most consoling kind began to address her—

"You know, Lucy, my chicken it was all your fault; you would never let the girl alone; always finding something to peck at, though curse me if ever I could find out for what. She was always the mildest little thing—so good humoured—so obliging."

"To be sure she was always a good natured girl. that she was," said Mrs. Bloomfield, drying her eyes.

"And when she is a countess you will think her more so Lucy," returned the colonel.

"That's for certain," answered Mrs. Bloomfield. Dear heart! what shall I do to make it up with her? and if I don't there is his lordship's favour gone for ever. Sophy, dear, order tea and coffee to be got ready in the best drawing-room, and then go and try to persuade her to come down to tea; go, my love, tell her to take no notice of what is past. And as to her good fortune in a certain quarter, say nothing about that as she does not know it; we have no occasion to be the first to inform her of it."

"Oh, you are a couple of pretty chicks," cried the colonel laughing.

With a very ill grace, as she really felt ashamed of her conduct, Sophia prepared to obey her mother, and going up to Evadne's room she there beheld her weeping on the bosom of Hannah, who, with very little ceremony, demanded to know what she wanted there?

Sophia, with some surprise, replied, "what do I want, Hannah?"

"To kill this dear child," returned Hannah. "You want to break her heart, I know you do; and when you have sent her to the grave the devil will come and fetch you all, that's what he will."

“Hannah, are you out of your senses?” returned Miss Bloomfield, highly provoked, but Hannah continued—

“No, Miss Sophy, I am in my senses; but you’ll drive me mad shortly, I am certain; and there’s my old master, he ought to be ashamed of himself to suffer you all to be so cruel, he ought: a Christian soul a’nt patience to bear it.”

Sophia was now going out of the room, declaring she would not longer endure such impertinence, but send her mamma to her, when Evadne, mildly interposing, entreated Hannah to be quiet.

“Mamma requests that you will come down to tea, Evadne,” said Sophia, offering her hand to the dejected girl.

Evadne, unaccustomed as she had ever been to the slightest mark of kindness from Sophia, looked in her face, and there beheld such an altered expression in it, that she was totally at a loss to comprehend its meaning; but, like the dove, ever ready to hold out the olive branch for peace, informed her that she would obey her aunt’s commands in a few moments.

“But promise me that you will come,” said Sophia, “and pray, Hannah, assist my cousin to adjust her hair and change her dress.”

“I will if she pleases,” cried Hannah; “but if she was to change her dress twenty times, she could not look one bit handsomer; though to be sure, her pretty eyes are a little red with crying; nobody will love her the less for that.”

“Oh, Sophia!” said Evadne, grateful for the little shew of kindness she had evinced towards her; and

which was as sudden as unexpected. "Oh, Sophia! will you then allow me to call you cousin? and does your heart acknowledge me as such?"

For such an appeal made to her sensibility, Sophia, was unprepared; but as we all know the extent of the delicacy of that young lady's feelings, we cannot conclude the result to be very painful, as she coolly replied, though with as much good humour as at that moment she was mistress of—

"Certainly I do, Evadne;" and away she went to order tea, and to tell her mother privately of the impertinence of Hannah, whom she was resolved should not go unpunished.

Lord Glenroy had returned in somewhat better humour, which increased, as Mrs. Bloomfield took care he should hear, on his first coming into the room, that her severity to Evadne was wonderfully relaxed, for, addressing herself to a servant loud enough to be heard, she desired him to inform Miss Le Burney that they waited tea for her.

Old James stared, unused to such ceremony, and for the person she had mentioned, when she repeated a second time her commands.

"Do you hear, James," continued Mrs. Bloomfield, "tell my dear niece I shan't make the tea till she comes."

Old James shook his head, and as he went down stairs, muttered to himself—

"Dear niece; shan't make the tea till she comes! Oh! when the devil is kind there is always something in the wind, that's for certain."

Lord Glenroy too would have uttered, Oh, hypo-

crite ! but he was too much delighted at this moment in the hope of seeing and conversing with Evadne to attend to any thing else.

She now entered the room, and, spite of the confusion which overpowered her, his lordship immediately arose and conducted her to a chair. Mrs. Bloomfield now, with an art which was peculiar to herself alone, attempted to weedle his lordship into good humour ; determined, at all events, that he should have no cause of complaint in future, one moment, therefore, she addressed Evadne with—

“ Have I made your tea as you like it, my dear ? ” the next she observed the great likeness, a resemblance which had never struck her before, there was between the colonel and her dear niece ; in short, she so managed matters before the tea things were removed, as to be on quite as good terms with his lordship as she could wish : and that point being gained, she next endeavoured by her kind attention to Evadne, to make her forget her former severity. Sophia too, considering all things, played her part with a tolerable good grace ; but the colonel, not quite so great a hypocrite as either of them, remained in his usual character.

To describe the feelings of the agitated girl is impossible ; her surprise overcame her, and the emotions of her innocent heart expressed itself in every line of her animated countenance. Alas ! that heart throbbed alone at the recollection but of one object, and sighs and often tears accompanied his dear remembrance. Vain was the attempt of lord Glenroy to draw her into conversation ; a few general remarks and cold replies to his impassioned speeches was all

that he could obtain this evening. But wholly to escape from his attentions she found to be impossible ; for he had drawn his chair close to hers, which he never quitted the whole evening. Thus was she compelled to listen to his conversation, and to hear an almost open confession of his love ; which he repeated to her, in so earnest, and determined a manner, that, her timid soul shrunk abashed at his vehemence. Confused and trembling, she heard in silence all he chose to utter ; and the image of her absent Henry reminding her of those sacred vows of everlasting fidelity which they had so solemnly pledged to each other, filled her now agonized and terrified imagination with strange and dreadful apprehensions ; and instantly resolving that he should not possess himself of one shadow of hope, as she retired for the night, she coldly courtesied to him ; but notwithstanding her constraint, calling her his loveliest angel, he imprinted on her hand an ardent kiss ; requesting that, in the morning, she would honor him with an hour's serious conversation in the presence of her uncle. Evadne, colouring deeply, made no reply ; but when alone in her own apartment, she gave way to grief and despair which almost overpowered her.

The mysterious conduct of her relations was now unravelled, and the deception of their characters completely revealed ; and she beheld the arts by which they intended to delude her with sorrow, indignation, and contempt. To oppose her uncle's wishes of seeing her united to a man of such consequence ; to point out objections against lord Glenroy ; or to plead her attachment to Henry Montreville would, she was well convinced, be a vain attempt. But to submit to a forced

alliance wherein her heart took no part—to give up her soul's idol—to revoke those sacred vows which she had pledged to him in the sight of heaven; and tamely become the victim of tyrannic power—Oh! could she do that—“ No, Montreville !” cried she, taking from her bosom the miniature picture which he had given her, “ when I consent to become so perfidious a wretch, may heaven, in that moment, desert me!—when I tear from my heart your loved image, or forfeit those vows which I have sworn to thee, may the worst of punishments befall me—your hatred, your contempt! And the last words which Henry had uttered now sounded in her ears :—“ Evadne, remember your vows! do not I implore you, do not sacrifice to unjust authority what is still your own—your liberty! She retired to rest, but

“ Tired nature's sweet restorer balmy sleep”

was a stranger to her pillow. She closed her eyes, but her imagination, wandering and disturbed, kept her awake till, the coming morning (still more dreadful than the night to Evadne) reminded her of the wretchedness of her situation.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

Mrs. Bloomfield arose from her downy slumbers on this morning in the sweetest of all imaginable dispositions, and saluted lord Glenroy with one of those smirking smiles, which always, with this lady, denominated internal satisfaction ; particularly as she perceived the colonel to be deeply engaged in conversation with the earl.

“ I hope I don’t interrupt your lordship’s business,” said she, pretty well guessing what that business was, and whom it concerned, as she took her seat at the breakfast table.”

“ By no means,” said lord Glenroy, “ for we were just then talking of you.”

Mrs. Bloomfield was raised at least ten inches higher in her own conceit, and she replied,—

“ I am sure your lordship is uncommonly polite and vastly good to think of me ; but pray what might it be about ?”

“ A woman’s curiosity,” said the colonel, “ is never easy till it is once satisfied. You must know then Lucy that, his lordship is so extremely condescending, as to commission his steward in town to send you down a service of plate, which is to be here time enough for a certain occasion that will shortly take place.”

Mrs. Bloomfield could hardly restrain herself from falling at his lordship’s feet ; her eyes actually sparkled with delight ; and she overwhelmed him with such a profusion of high-flown compliments, and poured into

his ears such a torrent of fulsome praises, as, perhaps, never were equalled, certainly never surpassed.

Sophia was now desired to call her dear dear cousin down to breakfast ; but Evadne complaining of a dreadful pain in her head, which pain, alas ! was also in her heart, begged to be excused from coming down stairs ; and Hannah was desired to prepare her breakfast in her own apartment.

Lord Glenroy when he expressed his concern at her indisposition was sincere ; it was the first time that his heart had ever been assailed by a virtuous attachment ; true, many a virtuous female had attracted his regard, had inspired him with passion, but it was only that passion which attempted the ruin of its object ; it was only that regard which loved but to destroy. But here a fascinating spell bound all his senses ; and virtue, chastened by refinement, commanded his respect : he sighed for the possession of beauty ; but here he felt it was to be sanctioned by honour, and purchased with esteem.

In the absence of Evadne he requested the colonel explicitly to inform him at what time of her life she had been consigned to his care, and if the parents of Evadne had both died during her infancy ; at which question the colonel became greatly affected, said it was a melancholy story, as it concerned a sister whom he once tenderly loved, and whose memory he still cherished with affection ; but that he would endeavour to satisfy his Lordship's enquiry with every particular, as far as he could recollect since the first commencement of her acquaintance with her seducer.

“ Seducer ! ” exclaimed lord Glenroy. “ Her seducer ! did I hear right ? is then the lovely Evadne the

offspring of guilt?" and his lordship waited in breathless expectation of the colonel's reply.

"When I said seducer, my lord," resumed the colonel, "I meant not in the general acceptation of the word. The seducer of her affections, the destroyer of her happiness and repose; but I do not say he was the betrayer of her honour. No, her fame was spotless as an angel's and she died a martyred innocent."

Lord Glenroy looked affected. "You interest me, colonel," cried he, "deeply interest me, pray go on."

"To be brief then," continued the colonel, "for it is a subject I can never bear to dwell on, my sister and myself were the only children of a widowed mother, my father, in the service of his country, having died abroad; my mother also dying when my sister was fifteen, bequeathed her to my care. The mind of Laura was already formed by an indulgent mother; her heart was the temple of purity, and her form and her face, such as you now behold Evadne, of whom my sister was the counterpart. It was not to be supposed that I could long undertake the care of so precious a charge, soldier of fortune that I was, without exposing her to temptation and to danger; and being called away to the active duties of my situation, I placed the young Laura, a circumstance ever to be regretted, at one of those fashionable seminaries, a London boarding school, and under the protection of a woman of strict morals and of indisputable character. I was absent from home about five years, during which period I kept up a regular correspondence with my sister, whose letters were ever the pure effusions of an affectionate heart. At length the mandate came to relieve us from foreign service, and the regiment, in

which I bore a colonel's commission, was ordered to England. I have already told your lordship that I regarded with more than common affection, Laura. I even doated on her, and on my arrival home I flew with an impatience and anxiety not to be expressed to meet the sister my soul adored. Judge then the agony of my feelings when I found her, still in the same habitation where I had left her, but how shall I describe the grief and shame which overwhelmed me? I found her pregnant!"

At this part of the colonel's narrative lord Glenroy evinced considerable agitation, but entreated the colonel to proceed.

"Conceive, my lord, my rage, my despair. Laura threw herself at my feet even in that situation, and besought me to hear her, assuring me that she was honourably, though clandestinely married; but at that moment I confess her corpse would have been an object less displeasing, and I refused to listen to her. Hurried away by the violence of my passion, I reviled her in the bitterest terms, and even reproached her with her infamy, told her that she had for ever forfeited all claim and right to my protection, and declared that I would instantly put an end to my existence if she did not that moment deliver up the name of her seducer. Never shall I forget, my lord, the look and manner in which she then addressed me, as clasping her hands together, she repeated my words—

" 'My seducer!' uttered she; 'seducer he is none; he is my husband, the chosen of my heart.'

"His name," cried I, "wretched girl, his name?"

“ ‘ Reginald Le Burney,’ she replied, and fell lifeless at my feet.

“ Pity now suspended every other sensation, and I raised her from the ground, and by the most affectionate caresses and soothing attentions, succeeded in recovering her. As I hung over her altered form, I had an opportunity of observing more minutely the changed expression of a countenance that, once blushing like the half-blown rose, exhibited also its freshness and its beauty, and my tears, which till then I had commanded, flowed without the power of restraint. My emotions affected her more than my rage had done, and she would again have fainted, had I not supported her in my arms, and with fresh assurances of my regard, addressed her by the tender name of sister. When calmer moments succeeded the perturbation of our minds, she informed me, that accompanied by Mrs. Hamilton, she had visited a gentleman’s family at Blackheath, where she first beheld and was introduced to Mr. Le Burney; ; that he was a young man of the most fascinating manners—the most captivating exterior; that his understanding and accomplishments were of the first order, and that from hence an intimacy had subsisted between them. That he employed no arts to ensnare her affection; no seduction to betray her honour; but that her heart yielded to his superior merit from the first hour she beheld him; that a confession of mutual regard had been exchanged between them, without the knowledge of Mrs. Hamilton or any other person, and that things were precisely in this state, when one morning he entered her apartment abruptly, his countenance pale,

his looks disordered, and holding out a letter in his hand, requested she would peruse it, and immediately decide upon its contents."

The colonel then produced a letter, which he took from his cabinet, and giving it into his lordship's hands, he perused words to the following effect, addressed to Reginald Le Burney :—

"Your long absence, my beloved Reginald, both surprises and afflicts me. What charm does the cold and frigid climate of England possess, that you continue to remain so long beyond the time affixed for your return. Your father's malady has gained strength every hour since your departure, and I fear that his dissolution is rapidly approaching. Hasten then, my beloved son, to receive his blessing, and to comfort your disconsolate and affectionate mother,

"GERALDINE LE BURNEY."

Lord Glenroy having perused the letter and returned it to the colonel, begged that he would continue his narrative.

"My sister then informed me," resumed colonel Bloomfield, "that Le Burney, in language of the most impassioned kind, persuaded her to consent to a private union, and afterwards to accompany him to Italy, whither his duty to his family indispensibly called him; and that wholly overcome by his persuasions, and unable to resist the prayers and intreaties of the man she so greatly loved, she at last, and in the presence of Mrs. Hamilton, consented to their marriage; which ceremony took place the ensuing morning, Mrs. Hamilton being the only witness present. That Le

Burney remained in England five weeks longer after this event ; during the whole of which time he exerted all the eloquence he possessed, and made use of every argument, to induce Laura to go with him to Italy ; but as he had represented his father to be an austere man ; and conceiving his mother to be of an haughty disposition, she dreaded to encounter an unwelcome reception ; to which she united her fear of a sea voyage and her wish to see and be reconciled to me.

“ Thus, my lord, did my poor sister conclude her little history ; imploring my forgiveness for the error she had been guilty of. I folded her to my heart ; redoubled my caresses ; and again assured her of my protection ; while I ventured to inquire how long since Le Burney had sailed for Italy, and when she expected to receive a letter from him. Her reply was that, she was hourly in expectation of having intelligence ; and that he had been absent nearly six months. I knew that letters sometimes failed in arriving safe to the place of their destination, and therefore forbore to express my surprise at the length of time which had elapsed, lest it might alarm her. With Mrs. Hamilton I had also several conversations respecting Le Burney, and found that her description of him exactly tallied with my sister’s. She assured me that he was a most amiable young man ; and that his family in Italy were of the first rank and respectability.

“ Still I deplored the rashness of this union ; and expressed my astonishment that no intelligence had arrived from him : she shook her head, and cautioned me to be silent on the subject ; hinting her apprehensions that some calamity had overtaken him. He had left in her hands notes to the amount of two hundred

pounds for the use of his wife till he should arrive in Italy; when he promised a further remittance. Several weeks passed on and I began to conceive that Le Burney had either perished by shipwreck, or in the circle of his own friends, family, and connexions had forgotten his unhappy Laura; Mrs. Hamilton too, was obliged to confess that, she herself admitted such reflections: but we carefully concealed from the knowledge of my sister such fearful doubts and apprehensions; and sought to amuse her by every exertion in our power. Sometimes I would prevail on her to accompany me to the theatre, and there gratify her taste with dramatic performances, of which I knew she was particularly fond; at another time, leaning on my arm, she would take an evening's ramble; while Mrs. Hamilton and myself would point out the beauties of the surrounding country, and cheer her dejected spirits by recounting some humorous tale. How often have I played the old soldier, and beguiled her of a smile by telling her of my wonderful exploits when I was campaigning.

“ One morning, accustomed to pay my early visits to her, I was met by Mrs. Hamilton, who informed me that, my sister had passed a sleepless night, and had arisen with a depression of spirits greater than she had ever yet witnessed. I followed her to the chamber of my poor Laura; where, soon indeed, I perceived a melancholy and visible change. On my approaching her she burst into tears:—

“ ‘ Have you brought me a letter from Le Burney,’ uttered she, ‘ Oh! tell me my brother that you bring intelligence of my husband! tell me, I beseech you, tell me, whether Reginald is alive or dead!’ ”



Unprepared for such a demand, and shocked at her altered looks, I knew not what to reply. I pressed her cold hand to my lips, and comforted her in the best manner that I could ; but my courage failed me when I attempted to give her hopes of Le Burney's return : for I now began to think my fears for his safety would shortly be verified ; and I dreaded the consequence which would result from such an event.

“ ‘ I saw,’ continued my sister, ‘ I saw Le Burney last night in a fearful dream, and that is the cause of my dejection this morning. I was standing on a rock ; with difficulty Le Burney scrambled up its rugged sides, and approached me ; when, eager to fly to his embraces, my foot slipped ; I lost sight of Le Burney, and was precipitated to the bottom. When I awoke, I found my eyes wet with my tears ; cold drops of perspiration stood on my forehead ; and my hands were benumbed and cold as you now feel them my brother.’

“ I endeavoured to laugh my sister out of such imaginary terrors and useless apprehensions ; but I found this dream had made a stronger impression than could be easily removed : and she continued the whole of the day restless and miserable.

“ Towards the evening we persuaded her to lie down on a sofa which was placed in the dining room, where we usually sat ; and she had just sunk into a slumber, when a loud knocking at the door, and a strange gruff voice saluted our ear. I desired Mrs. Hamilton to be prepared to take charge of my sister ; while I flew to inquire myself who this visitor could be. I had no sooner unbarred the door, than a man habited in seaman's clothes, with very little ceremony, demanded to know if he had come to the right port.

“ ‘ Because as how you see, your honour,’ said he, ‘ I have gotten a letter in my pocket for one madam Hamilton, from our captain.’ ”

“ I begged the man, for the love of Heaven, not to utter a word more, but to repair to the first public-house in the neighbourhood, whither I would immediately follow him.

“ He obeyed in silence, and this being the work of a moment, I returned to the parlour, where I rejoiced to find Laura still sleeping. I stole softly out, and soon discovered the house where the honest Jack Tar awaited my coming. I called for glasses of grog, of which I begged he would partake, and then demanded to know the particulars of his errand. Producing his captain’s letter, and taking a fresh quid of tobacco, he heaved a deep sigh, and in the language of a seaman bewailed the fate of his unfortunate messmates.

“ With an agitation not to be described, I tore the letter open, which was addressed to Mrs. Hamilton, and found that it contained the following heart-rending intelligence from the captain of the ship in which Le Burney had sailed for Italy:—”

The colonel produced the letter, which lord Glenroy immediately perused.

“ MADAM.—The loss of my ship and crew cannot more afflict me, than to be the bearer of such melancholy tidings to you. As you must, doubtless, be greatly interested for the fate of Mr. Le Burney, the worthy young gentleman who took his passage on board my ship the *St. Antonia*, in the month of November last, and being then bound for Italy, we set sail in company with six other vessels, but sepa-

rated in a most dreadful gale of wind off the Bay of Biscay, concluded that they shared the same fate as my unfortunate crew. Finding all efforts to save the ship to be impossible, we hoisted the long boat, in which Mr. Le Burney, and as many of our brave seamen as we could take with any safety, got. For many hours we continued abandoned to the fury of the winds and waves ; but alas ! the darkness of the night precluded every possibility of being saved—she struck on a rock with tremendous force, and in that awful moment myself, my mate, and a boy, were the only survivors of the many souls that ultimately perished. Dashed with violence on some fragments of the rocks, we clung for support till the morning ; but exhausted with fatigue, our limbs benumbed with cold, we were nearly expiring, when some inhabitants of a light house discovered us, and by their timely assistance, preserved our lives. On my arrival in London I took the earliest opportunity of forwarding the particulars of an event which so nearly concerned you, and of which the papers may have only furnished you with a partial account.

“ I remain, Madam,

“ Most sincerely grieved,

“ Your humble Servant,

“ ROBERT HANBURY.”

“ *To Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton.*”

“ My distress on finding the destiny of this unhappy young man confirmed was such, my lord, as you may easily imagine ; but what did I not endure for my poor Laura ; never more doomed to meet the object of her tenderest affections : and how to disclose to her such dreadful tidings I knew not in her present

delicate situation, for she was now far advanced in her pregnancy. I was convinced it would be instant annihilation. I resolved, therefore, to consult with Mrs. Hamilton, how to act in so trying a moment.

“On my return home I found my sister taking coffee with Mrs. Hamilton; she appeared more composed, and anxiously enquired why I had been so long absent from her? But I evaded her enquiries, and endeavoured to amuse her with general conversation till she retired for the night. But she had no sooner quitted us, than I imparted to Mrs. Hamilton my dreadful news, at which she shed tears, declaring it was an event she had long foreboded, and prudently advised, that if a possibility yet remained to keep it secret from Laura till after the period of her accouchement, we should employ every means so to do, when it could not be attended with such alarming circumstances. On this point we had agreed, but she was not to be so easily blinded; and a fatal prediction of what had happened in a few weeks after this seemed to flash on her mind; she now refused every consolation we could offer, scarcely ate at her meals, and would sit for whole hours without appearing to notice any thing. A physician attended her, but no argument could prevail with her to take his prescriptions. My grief on this occasion exceeded all bounds. I implored her by every tie, both tender and sacred, to rouse herself from this dreadful lethargy, and, for the preservation of her yet unborn infant, to exert the faculties of her mind, by endeavouring to bear with more fortitude the irreparable loss she had sustained. But though I had adverted to this subject with the greatest caution and delicacy, yet it operated too powerfully on her

feelings, and repeated faintings succeeded. Mrs. Hamilton, exceedingly alarmed, now assured me she cherished but little hopes of her recovery. About midnight, as I never quitted her, she called me to her bed side, and extending her hand towards me with the seraphic smile of a departing angel, in a calm tone of voice addressed me :—

“ ‘ I wish not to alarm you, my best of brothers and of friends,’ uttered she, ‘ when I inform you that my suffering will soon be over, and that I feel my dissolution to be drawing near. You would have deceived me in the hope that Le Burney yet lived, but an internal monitor assures me that here I shall never more behold him. Do not then afflict yourself, my brother, for I am too happy in the thought of being united to him in a better world. I feel I shall not survive the birth of my infant, and conjure you to attend to this my last request. Should it prove a daughter, let her be baptized by the name of my sainted mother—Evadne! If a son—here her voice became greatly affected—let him be called Reginald.” She then affectionately embraced me, and I quitted the room, wholly unable to suppress the violence of my emotions. The time of her delivery approaching, I waited the issue with the most dreadful anxiety ; but, alas ! in a few hours it was all at an end.

“ Mrs. Hamilton, almost blinded by her tears, returned to me, with the intelligence that Laura had given birth to a female infant.

“ ‘ But its mother ?’ cried I.

“ ‘ Is gone for ever!’ replied she. For some hours I became insensible to every object which surrounded me.”

The colonel now took out his handkerchief, and wiped the tears falling unconsciously down his face ; and lord Glenroy sighing profoundly, confessed himself to be much affected by his melancholy recital, and the colonel continued.

“ Thus died Laura, wife of Le Burney, perishable flower, too early cropt by the inevitable hand of destiny, and sent to an untimely grave.”

Such, my lord, are the fruits of early impressions ; and such the dangers affixed to the inexperienced, the tender, and the too suddenly attached heart.

## CHAPTER XXX.

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The dinner, to which no one did justice on this day but Mrs. Bloomfield and Sophia, was removed from the table almost untouched, the colonel's conversation with lord Glenroy having unhinged him for further society for the remainder of the day. When Evadne came into the room, her pale countenance, dejected manner, and the soft tones of her plaintive voice, made him start ; and tenderly taking her hand, as she passed him to take a seat at the table, he recommended her to eat something and to drink a glass of wine, observing that they had all got the blue devils, and must shake them off.

Lord Glenroy, indeed, seemed wholly absorbed in some very serious contemplations, and was regardless of every object but Evadne ; on her he lavished all his attentions, and when the cloth was withdrawn, Mrs. Bloomfield having purposely removed, the colonel, pouring out a glass of wine, requested his niece to drink of it ; but she declined, and was going to retire, when his lordship gently detaining her, and leading her back to the chair she had quitted, now introduced the subject nearest his heart, making her, in the presence of the colonel, an open avowal of his regard, with the most liberal offer of his hand and fortune ; which, if accepted, would render him the happiest of mankind ; and that, immediately upon her consenting to become his wife, he would make a settlement of four thousand a year upon her, which, upon her marriage, and ever after, would become her private property. He now awaited her reply, as he eagerly watched every turn of her beautiful countenance, now agitated beyond description, which the colonel remarking, gently urged her to make some acknowledgment for his lordship's very handsome and flattering proposal.

Evadne burst into tears, and threw herself at her uncle's feet, before he had the power of raising her, and in accents of the most piercing anguish, implored him to forgive her for the first fault she had ever been guilty of.

Lord Glenroy looked confounded. The thought of her unfortunate mother recurring to his recollection, and dreading to hear a similar confession pronounced from the lips of the daughter also, gasped almost for breath, while the colonel uttered—

“ Name it, Evadne ! instantly confess to me of

what nature is that fault, with which I am indeed unacquainted, for you have ever been the most pliant, the most prudent, and the most obedient of girls. Do not force me to retract that good opinion of you ; Evadne do not compel me to be severe."

"Alas! then," cried the weeping girl, "what will become of me, for you will never pardon me, when I declare I have offended beyond the reach of your forgiveness; but never shall Evadne Le Burney basely stoop to dissimulation, to hide a passion which she frankly acknowledges to be the glory and pride of her existence. Know then, that long before I knew, thought of, or beheld his lordship, I gave my heart to the possession of another. That without your knowledge I plighted vows to him; and without your permission sacredly, Oh! sacredly, promised to become his wife!"

Lord Glenroy now rose, bit his lips, and paced the room in a fury.

"You did, my fine romantic heroine, did you," cried the colonel. "And pray who is the hero of your romance?"

"Who?" said lord Glenroy, "who but the detested Henry Montreville?" Presumptuous boy! let him but meet my fury, and"—

"Oh! my lord," cried the now terrified Evadne, and scarcely knowing what she uttered, "recall your dreadful words. Indeed he merits not your anger; do not make him the object of your unjust resentment. Promise me that, and"—

"What," cried lord Glenroy, "plead for my rival! What, madam, think you I shall tamely submit to hear you name him such, and to my face? To tell Glen-



roy's earl there is another dearer—another claim more powerful than mine. Insulting girl!—but beware ; as yet I am your friend—your impassioned lover ! Reject my suit, and you will compel me to become your bitterest enemy.”

“ So saying the earl quitted the room, dreadfully convulsed with passion.”

Evadne now clung to the colonel's knees, while she emphatically pronounced, “ I am lost for ever !”

This was a moment of excessive trial to the feelings of colonel Bloomfield. Henry Montreville was, and ever had been with him an avowed favourite, and nature for a short time prevailed ; in the weeping form of Evadne, he now beheld the living image of his sister—the sister he once adored and her mother ; and to spurn the child from his embraces, he found he had not the power ; though her confessing that she loved Montreville was a mortal stab to his prospects with lord Glenroy, yet he cherished great hopes, from the softness of her disposition, that she would in time yield to his persuasions, and consent to become countess of Glenroy. He therefore called Hannah, and leaving his niece to her care, he tenderly imprinted a kiss on her cheek, and telling her to compose herself and be a good girl, went out to seek the irritated lord Glenroy.

Evadne suffered Hannah to lead her to her apartment without being able to utter a single word ; nor could Hannah offer her any consolation ; her case was a desperate one, and admitted of no alternative. Hannah looked in her face, and there beheld an expression of such fixed despair, such settled despondency, that, bursting into tears, she exclaimed—

“ They will never come to any good, that’s to a certainty : a christian soul an’t patience to bear it.”

She then left Evadne for a few moments, not wishing her to see how much she was affected by her situation.”

Evadne, now, for the first time in her life, accused the mother of Henry of cruelty ; she had suddenly separated her from the object of her tenderest affections at the very moment that she most stood in need of his protection, and left her exposed, if not to temptation, at least to persecution, and in the power of those from whom it was impossible to fly. Montreville too had faithfully promised to write, but no intelligence had yet arrived from him ; and though she could never doubt of his strong attachment, yet, being ignorant of his destiny, filled her mind with the most anxious and alarming apprehensions.

In all afflictions, and under the pressure of the heaviest calamity which can assail us, religion is the surest prop to sustain the drooping spirits, or pour a balm on the lacerated heart ; and this was the cordial of which the wretched daughter of the unfortunate Laura now tasted and was comforted. She prayed that, whatever might be her fate, her vows to Henry might still be held sacred ; and resolved that, no tortures they might inflict on her to induce compliance with this detested marriage, should weaken her firm faith to Montreville ; being resolutely determined that her tongue should never sanction vows which were foreign to her heart.

During the time that Evadne was engaged in these reflections the colonel was in quest of Lord Glenroy, and found him, not under the shade of “ melancholy

boughs" breathing warm sighs on the desert air, but in a place the most remote of all others from his imagination, namely, in Mrs. Bloomfield's dressing room, sitting very snugly beside her, and deeply engaged in conversation apparently of a most interesting kind. A smirking smile betrayed the good humour the lady was in, as, holding out one of her hands to the colonel he beheld on her little finger a very elegant diamond ring which his lordship had just presented her with for the completion of certain plans, the nature of which, we are not acquainted with.

The colonel beheld its sparkling lustre with looks of admiration not to be expressed; but perceiving his lordship's dejection, attempted to rally him, quoting the old adage "faint heart never won fair lady." Mrs. Bloomfield declared that the girl must have taken leave of her seven senses to be in love with a whining love-sick boy who was as poor as a church mouse and as bare as a robin; that for her part she always expected it would come to that when the colonel allowed him such free access to his house; and that she had long perceived Evadne to have had a hankering after him; and would have reprimanded her for it but she was so great a favorite with a certain person (meaning the colonel), it was as much as her life was worth to say a word; but that now it was come to a fine kettle of fish; and, Oh!—was it her Sophy, she should know what to do: bread and water, and confine her in a dark chamber till the little perverse hussey was brought to her senses!

Lord Glenroy expressed his displeasure by a frown, and Mrs. Bloomfield again became as gentle as the dove; she now launched forth in praise of the beauty

of Evadne ; but his lordship retired to his own apartment, where he held a long conversation with the colonel ; the effect of which was, that, when he came into the tea-room at eight o'clock in the evening, he appeared perfectly tranquil ; not a frown ruffled his countenance : and he smiled most graciously on Mrs. Bloomfield and Sophia, whom he presented with a pair of bracelets, ear-rings, and necklace of great value : which called forth many a roguish smile, and many a crimson blush, whenever he addressed her. The truth was, this very delicate young lady entertained the most flattering hopes that, as Evadne had rejected his suit, his lordship's attention would at last be directed to her ; and viewing the glittering ornaments, Ah ! thought she, who but Evadne would refuse such a man !

For three weeks lord Glenroy continued to appear in a new character ; and Evadne suffering no importunities from him on the subject of his passion as he addressed her, his conduct being marked with the most distant respect, began to receive his attentions with more complacency, which delighted the colonel to a degree of enthusiasm, and he already beheld her in imagination the countess of Glenroy ; nay, he even went so far as to prognosticate that he should one day become uncle to a young lord ; and every indulgence was granted to Evadne which the utmost of her wishes extended to : music she had ever delighted in ; and she was surprised to find in her apartment one morning a beautiful harp of the richest workmanship and most exquisite tone. On expressing her astonishment, the colonel caught her in his arms, and informed her that, it was a little device of his own to surprize her ; for

when she was a good girl there was nothing on earth he thought too expensive that he could procure for her. Evadne could scarcely credit the evidence of her senses, and modestly replied,—

“ But my dear uncle, if indeed this beautiful harp is a gift of yours, it is by much too expensive. I cannot bear you should put yourself to such needless trouble on my account.”

The colonel laughed ; and in reality laughed in his sleeve, lord Glenroy's money having paid for the harp. He had besides pressed on the colonel's acceptance notes to the amount of five hundred pounds, to defray the expences, as he told him, of the time he had been at his house ; and from which he had no intention to depart without Evadne, whom he resolutely determined to possess at the hazard of his life.

From the present mode of conduct which he had adopted, he now artfully perceived he gained some little ground in her esteem, as she condescended to accept of trifling services from his hands, such as driving her out in his barouche, suffering him to read to her of a morning, and to accompany her in a walk of an evening. Thus, by almost imperceptible degrees, she became familiarised to his attentions, and listened to his conversation, without once supposing that by so doing his lordship would gather hope, and in consequence exult in that hope, by the idea that he was now not indifferent to her.

Had Evadne possessed a more perfect knowledge of mankind, she would have found that the vanity of men extends beyond all bounds, and that the slightest, the most distant mark of favour on our side, will make them presume that they are become of consequence to

us. One evening when Evadne was hanging over her favourite harp, accompanying herself to the beautiful Scotch air of "*Auld lang syne*," she was called suddenly down stairs by the colonel to read a letter, which, he was sorry to say, concerned his dear niece very materially, it being in the hand-writing of Mrs. Montreville, and contained very melancholy intelligence.

"From Mrs. Montreville," cried Evadne, "is it not then from Henry, and snatching it from the colonel's hands, pale and trembling she eagerly perused its contents, which were to the following purport:—

"SIR—The agonies which rend a fond mother's heart, who feels compelled to the dreadful task of acquainting you with the death of her only son, may be easier felt than described. He went to sea, and on his voyage to India, as I am informed, for some time continued well; but on their near arrival to that coast, was attacked by a fever of the most malignant tendency with such rapidity as to baffle all medical assistance, and he departed this life before he reached India. Assure the young lady, your niece, Miss Evadne Le Burney, for whom I know that my son cherished the most tender regard, that I am myself inconsolable, and pity the pangs she will naturally feel at hearing intelligence so afflicting. Her concern at the death of my poor Henry will, doubtless, be considerable, but I trust that time will reconcile her to an event for which there is no remedy. Many years of happiness are yet in store for one so young and beautiful, but for a widowed and wretched

mother, of whom he was the sole surviving hope, there can be none. With my best wishes for the future prosperity of your niece, and compliments to Mrs. and Miss Bloomfield,

“ I remain, Sir,

“ The truly disconsolate

“ OLIVIA MONTREVILLE.”

“ *To colonel Bloomfield.*”

Before Evadne had completed the third line, she uttered a piercing shriek, and fell lifeless into the arms of her uncle ; and Mrs. Bloomfield, calling Hannah, and expressing great concern, had her conveyed immediately to bed. By means of restoratives they partly recovered her, but a burning fever succeeded, and the next morning she exhibited symptoms of the strongest delirium. A physician was called in, who pronounced her to be in the most imminent danger ; resting his sole hopes of her recovery upon her youthful constitution. Meanwhile lord Glenroy grew almost frantic ; and the loss of Evadne would, he felt, be the loss of the whole habitable world. Mrs. Bloomfield, from the torrent of tears she seemed to have at her command, as they flowed every hour of the day, appeared most truly concerned for the indisposition of her dear niece ; and Sophia was also seen to cry. But let it be observed, that it was always in the presence of a third person, and that person was lord Glenroy.

For five weeks Evadne continued in a state which promised no hope of a speedy amendment. At some hours she appeared sensible of the loss she had sustained, and a faint repetition of the name of Montre-

ville would now and then escape her lips ; but at night she again relapsed, and her fever returned with increasing violence.

Lord Glenroy never quitted her bedside ; he would administer all her medicines with his own hand, and would never suffer any one to approach her but the colonel or Hannah.

Had Henry now been living, in moments so affecting as these, the colonel would have given all he was possessed of in the world to bestow on Evadne the object of her affections. At length, by almost imperceptible degrees, the violence of her fever abated ; the blood scarcely circulating in her veins, Evadne was pronounced out of immediate danger ; but the physician declared that her existence still hung upon a thread, and that as soon as she could gain sufficient strength to bear the fatigue of a carriage, change of air and a total change of scene would be absolutely necessary for the establishment of her health.

Lord Glenroy had suffered severely, and his pale and altered looks plainly indicated that he now needed a physician as much as the poor heart-broken Evadne, who now began to listen with more calmness than she had done at first, to the mild exhortations and excellent advice of the worthy doctor Robinson. He was a man of the most brilliant talents, and possessed of great skill in his professional character ; was blest with a heart cast in humanity's purest mould. He had been deeply affected at the extreme danger of his young and beautiful patient ; and having lost very recently a daughter much about the same age, felt himself attracted towards Evadne by a tie at once compassionate and tender. He omitted no opportunities



of offering his advice where he found it could avail the wretched sufferer, and his unceasing attentions and soothing kindness soon brought her in a train, if not of perfect convalescence, at least out of danger of a relapse. The enraptured lord Glenroy presented immediately doctor Robinson with five hundred pounds, which to his great astonishment he declined accepting.

"No, my lord," cried this worthy but, I must needs own, very extraordinary doctor.

"The service I am so happy as to render you or my fellow-creatures, shall never be purchased by that liberality which, pardon me, my lord, in this case exceeds the limits of prudence. With the aid of a superior power I have restored an angel to the world, who, to the semblance of one, unites also the virtues; and I am content, fully satisfied, in the discharge of my duty. I will receive the value of the medicines for my apothecary, but not a jot more. Money, my lord, I am not so careless of as you may imagine. I saved enough in my younger days to make me comfortable now I am growing old; and where is the merit of refusing your five hundred pounds when I literally do not want it? My poor girl is gone; she cannot share it with me. No, my lord, I do beseech you to bestow it where it is more wanted—give it to the poor!"

The astonished lord Glenroy shook the doctor's hand, and declared—

"That he was ready to do any thing he requested, as he had created him new life in the restoration of Evadne!"

Helpless as a babe the earl would carry her in his arms from her own apartment to a sofa placed in an adjoining room, where, assisted by the persuasions of

the doctor, he would use every gentle means to induce her to taste of a jelly or eat part of a custard. Regardless of his own health, he would confine himself whole days in her apartment, and thus passed two months in the exercise of the tenderest attention towards her. Carefully wrapt up in a large Indian shawl, he at last ventured to take her out in the air in an easy carriage, by which means she rapidly gathered strength ; and though Evadne was never seen to smile, yet the colour of the palest rose was gradually beheld to revisit her blanched cheek ; and lord Glenroy beheld its sweet approach with rapturous delight, and welcomed it with the same sensation that the benighted traveller, through the dark mazes of a cheerless gloom, beholds the faint glimmering of the “ reflected taper’s light.”

## CHAPTER XXXI



Doctor Robinson was now a constant visitor at the residence of colonel Bloomfield ; his fair patient was still under his hands ; and there were times when her extreme dejection of spirits preyed so visibly on her external appearance, that he was apprehensive her delicate constitution would never recover the shock it had sustained. Evadne, from childhood’s earliest dawn, had possessed a disposition of the mildest tendency ; she

never was heard to breathe a murmur at the little imaginary evils which children sometimes mourn over; nor when receiving chastisement, which ill nature or caprice would frequently inflict, had she been ever known to complain, but now in secret she sighed at the remembrance of Henry, whose name, buried in her almost broken heart, she uttered when alone in accents of the most piercing anguish, recalling to her memory every circumstance, however trivial, which had passed between them. Often in her dreams he appeared before her in luxuriant health and beauty, returned to claim those vows, which she had so sacredly sworn to him; suddenly then she would awake, her pulse throbbing, her heart beating, and she would exclaim—

“My Henry! if indeed thou art numbered with the dead, Oh! torture me not with thy loved image, so dear to my recollection, so fatal to my repose. Oh! do not mock my vows, my sainted love, for now, indeed, I never can be thine.”

From such dreams as these Evadne would awake, and rise feverish and discomposed, and her pale looks discovered the internal anguish that preyed upon her heart; it was then that lord Glenroy, distracted at the sight, would draw her from her griefs and paint the sufferings which he himself endured.

“Oh, Evadne!” he would cry, while tears started to his eyes, as he took her cold hand, “will you then destroy the cherished hopes which alone supports my existence? Must I behold you sink to an early grave the victim of unsubdued grief? Look at this altered form! observe my pallid cheek. I do not implore you to pity me; I am content to suffer for your sake, could I see but one smile animate tha

angelic countenance. But no, death will snatch you to his cold and icy arms: you are obstinately resolved to die: you reject consolation even from him who adores you. Oh, Montreville! living or dead still you are immortal, for you possess the love of Evadne.

Evadne looked at the earl, and remarked that he was indeed much changed since she had first beheld him during her long and painfully alarming illness; his conduct had been such as to awaken in her bosom the liveliest and warmest sensations of esteem; and her too conscious heart reproached her with ingratitude towards him. She wished to appear more sensible of his kindness; and with a smile expressive of her willingness to oblige him, gave him her hand, declaring she should consider herself the most ungrateful wretch in the world, could she ever be unmindful of his kind attentions and friendly services.

Doctor Robinson and the colonel now joined them, and perceived that his lordship was uncommonly elated, as he still held Evadne's hand; nor was it withdrawn till he had gently enforced a promise from her that she would behave better in future.

Lord Glenroy now proposed for the further re-establishment of Miss Le Burney's health to pass a few months at his estate in Scotland situated in the most beautiful and romantic part of that country about four miles distant from Montrose; commanding a bold and extensive view of the wide expanse of the ocean by which it was bounded. Glenroy Castle being his paternal seat, and that also of his noble ancestors, he was particularly partial to it, for it illustrated the valiant deeds of his brave countrymen. The lovely Evadne once his own, he intended the castle as his

future residence; and he proposed a journey into Scotland, not only to surprise her with the grandeur and magnificence of Glenroy Castle, but to point out the various beauties which that country every where affords the curious eye of the delighted traveller.

In summer it is romantically beautiful; and in winter, its snow-covered mountains exhibit a scene at once awfully grand and picturesque. There the hardy Scot labours to support a numerous and healthful progeny, and receives the reward due to cheerful industry, a comfortable old age.

Doctor Robinson was not proof against the arguments adduced as reasons why he should not be of the party into Scotland, lord Glenroy positively declaring that he would not go without him, and Evadne, sweetly smiling, united her intreaties, which we may conclude were more effectual than all their persuasions, for she held a very pretty little white hand for his acceptance, while she added,—

“ Ah, doctor Robinson ! indeed you must not refuse my lord Glenroy ; I am so accustomed to see you smile and to hear you talk, and so used to your discipline, that were you absent, and I refractory, nobody else would manage me ; and you know at times I can be a very naughty girl.

At this moment, as if from some sudden recollection she sighed heavily ; which the doctor instantly perceiving, replied with some gaiety,—

“ Faith, my sweet young lady, if you go on in this manner, you will make a coxcomb of me ; I shall certainly forget that I am a silly old man, and begin to talk nonsense by wholesale.

“ You will then accompany his Lordship,” cried Evadne, her eyes brightening with satisfaction, “ there my lord,” continued she, “ you hear the doctor?”

“ Allons, then,” cried lord Glenroy,” my angel, you have succeeded ; but where is the suit that could be rejected if you are the suppliant. Now then to surprise our lively Sophia with the news ; and I question whether this will not be the last year of her apprenticeship to a life of celibacy ; my countrymen are very gallant, and I assure you are warm admirers of the English ladies.”

At this moment Miss Bloomfield entered the room, and his lordship imparted the pleasing intelligence, with certain hints, which, in spite of her efforts to conceal it, made her anticipate a thousand promised joys.

Mrs. Bloomfield declared she should like vastly to visit Scotland ; and notwithstanding the many droll stories she had heard told of the Scotch ladies going without shoes or stockings, their living upon oatmeal and dried fish and such, and about their jumping over a broomstick to get married, she dared to say it was nothing more than a parcel of stuff ; and that she should find them very good sort of people.”

“ Good sort of people,” exclaimed lord Glenroy, a little nettled at her disgusting reflections on the inhabitants of a country every way to be commended for their prudence and simplicity of living, “ yes, madam, I have not the smallest doubt when you have the honor of being introduced to our Scotch ladies you will find the reports you have received to be erroneous, and the illiberal prejudices imbibed against them completely done away by the advantages, which, at the least, they are known to possess over the English, good humour

and hospitality. In the exercise of these alone they are endeared to the heart of sensibility; and carry the stranger's thanks and blessings to many a far distant land.

Mrs. Bloomfield begged a thousand pardons for having expressed her sentiments so freely on a subject, which, it was plain to be perceived, she knew nothing at all about; and pursing up her lips into a soft smile, while she looked very significantly at lord Glenroy observed, that, from the specimen which she had already seen, she was pretty sure of one thing."

"And what the devil's that Lucy," cried the colonel, hurt that she had in the slightest degree given offence to lord Glenroy."

"Why," returned Mrs. Bloomfield, "that the gentlemen of Scotland are the most handsomest and the most properest men that walks on Christian ground."

To this very elegant compliment his lordship returned a low bow; laughing at the peculiar art which this lady possessed in a superior style to all others, which, to use her own phrase, was "that of bringing matters nicely about."

The latter part of this evening proved a very busy one in the colonel's family, most of the servants having received orders to pack up every thing that was necessary for their intended departure, in which lord Glenroy's servants were desired to unite their assistance.

The obliging Mrs. Handy was all over in a tremble lest she should forget some of her mistresses fine laces; for what with coqueting with Mr. Smart when she was below stairs and furnishing materials for conversation of scandal above stairs in Mrs. Bloomfield's dressing room, the poor soul had enough to do; and to do her

ample justice, Mrs. Handy scorned to be an idler; she had always something ready prepared for the private ear of her mistress.

Sophia too found sufficient employment in consulting with her dear mamma, during the little time they had to spare, what dresses she should take with her; what hats, caps, and bonnets would best suit her complexion: what stays would render her shape the most attractive, and a variety of other little *et cetera's* not to be mentioned here.

Lord Glenroy reminded Evadne that she must not forget her harp, which had never been touched since the evening she had received intelligence of Montreville's death, when she started and changed colour; but gently pressing her hand, he added—

“Pardon me, my dearest life, but I cannot consent that you should leave it behind. You will be charmed by the Scotch music, which, like its poetry, is composed with such melody, and boasts of such attractive simplicity, that they must be stoics indeed who do not admire it, and confess its strong appeal to our sensibility; and his lordship sung the last strain of—

*“I ask na mair but thou and love.”*

in a manner that brought the long absent rose back to Evadne's cheek with the deepest hue; and she hurried from him to conceal emotions which, alas! derived their source more from the recollection of her departed lover, than to any prepossessions in favour of Glenroy, whom she now felt she could respect—could esteem, but never love. And yet she thought it was more than probable that she might become his wife. Such was the persecution of her fate, she could now form no reasonable objection to an alliance with him; the



generosity of his conduct, and the singularity of his attention towards her had indeed been such, as to call forth her gratitude, her admiration. All these seemed to favour an event which the hand of destiny had peculiarly brought about, and she bowed submissively to its decrees without a selfish consideration for her own happiness, or a very close examination of her feelings. She dared not search into her heart, for there she would find the image of Montreville so strongly engraven as not to admit one tender thought which was not connected with his memory ; and she delivered herself into the hands of those who governed her without a murmur, meek as the lamb offered up to sacrifice, pure as the spotless lilly : and her form, though beautiful, was but the reflected mirror of her more perfect mind.

At day-break next morning, lord Glenroy's servants, some of whom did not sleep at Bloomfield House, gave a loud summons at the door ; the whole family a few minutes after were stirring, and in less than an hour the carriages were drawn up to the door. Evadne had passed a most unquiet night, feeling a dread of she knew not what at quitting, for a length of time, the village which the remembrance of Montreville had rendered of consequence to her ; and Mrs. Montreville's house, now a deserted one, which from the windows of her own apartment she could every day behold, gave to her heart additional pangs at leaving it. Hannah, her faithful Hannah, attended, and as she assisted in dressing her, observed tears stealing fast down her cheek ; and with her eyes fixed on Mrs. Montreville's deserted dwelling, she mournfully pronounced—

“ Dear loved residence, which so lately contained all that my heart held dear, farewell. Perhaps I never more may view the chamber where my Henry slept. Ah, Hannah ! methinks this morning I am very sad. Look at that window ; there my Henry used to make garlands of flowers for Evadne ; and gather roses and honey-suckles to make a present to me in the fresh early morning. For whom does my Henry gather flowers now ? Oh ! do I live to pronounce that he is no more ? does Evadne live to say so ? ”

She looked again at the window of Montreville’s apartment, and sighed heavily. “ No, never more will he open that window,” cried she, and feeling overcome, she sunk into the arms of Hannah, and wept bitterly. Hannah attempted to comfort her as well as she could ; but even Hannah felt a strange foreboding that they should never again return to Bloomfield House ; and though she was to accompany her dear young lady to Scotland, by the express desire of lord Glenroy, yet she felt her spirits dull and heavy.

A general summons to breakfast now resounded from every part of the house, and Sophia came to remind Evadne, that his lordship and doctor Robinson had been waiting her presence in the breakfast-room near half an hour, adding that the carriages were all in readiness for their immediate departure.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

Sophia Bloomfield was on this morning uncommonly animated. She was dressed in a becoming sarcenet pelisse of the brightest blue, with white satin hat and rich plume of feathers, and white laced veil, which set off her rosy complexion, heightened by youthful expectation, and she exhibited a picture of blooming health and happy carelessness, forming a striking contrast with the sable habit (for the colonel had presented her with a rich suit of mourning for Henry Montreville) of Evadne, who was still pale from her recent confinement; and more pale on this morning than usual, owing to her agitation, yet her features were cast in the most perfect mould of beauty, and her countenance carried an expression of such fascinating sweetness, that it interested the heart of every beholder. There was besides an extreme delicacy in her fine shape, which enchanted the eye at the first glance; and, added to her soft manners and pensive character, rendered Evadne a far more attractive object than beauty bounding on the light fantastic toe.

"Evadne, my life!" cried his lordship, as he rose from his chair to conduct her to one next his own. "You must positively leave the blue devils and all their melancholy train behind you here in Bloomfield House. I will have no more lillies than those of which your bosom is composed; but roses of the freshest hue shall bloom again upon that lovely cheek. Evadne smiled through a shower of tears, but doctor

Robinson administering to her some hartshorn drops, and shaking her hand with affected roughness, declared she should have a rod in pickle if he heard another sigh or beheld another tear.

Evadne promised obedience to all his commands, and the whole party being assembled, they arranged in the following order:—In lord Glenroy's carriage, doctor Robinson, his lordship, and Evadne; in his lordship's travelling post chariot, the colonel and Mrs. and Miss Bloomfield, which they preferred to the baronche, which drew up the last, and was occupied by the following quartetto: Hannah and old James, Mr. Smart and the simpering Mrs. Handy, who, with a straw hat turned up in the front, from which projected a large bunch of rose-coloured ribands, endeavoured to imitate the ridiculous absurdities of her more ridiculous mistress, to the no small annoyance and disapprobation of old Hannah.

As the carriage drove off, lord Glenroy seated himself on the side which commanded a full view of Mrs. Montreville's deserted cottage, and drawing up the blinds completely hid it from the observation of Evadne, whom doctor Robinson contrived to keep engaged in close conversation; thus her spirits were kept alive, and the prospects of a boundless country opening on her view, she gradually became more tranquillised. The doctor was replete with humorous anecdotes, and possessed a fund of wit; and as often as he beguiled Evadne of a smile, the transported earl would acknowledge how much he was obliged to him by the most expressive looks of his approbation. They travelled but moderately at the express request of lord Glenroy, lest it might occasion a relapse to the yet

very delicate health of their fair invalid ; but on the fourth day of their setting out, the beautiful city of Edinburgh appeared in sight, gratifying their utmost expectations of all they had formed of its grandeur, taste, and elegance. As the carriage rolled down Princes Street, giving them a full view of the towering castle of Edinburgh and the delightful scenery around it, the colonel and Mrs. Bloomfield were loud in their acclamations of applause. According to custom, she made some curious remarks, observing now she was in Scotland she should fancy herself much nearer to Heaven, all the houses appearing to reach the skies.

Lord Glenroy's intention was to remain a few days in Edinburgh, in order to shew the ladies all that was worthy of observation, and the servants had orders to draw up to Drumbeck's hotel, where many spacious and elegant apartments were appropriated for their use during the time of their stay in that city. Mr. Smart was a gleeck man, very expert in his occupation, and availed himself of the opportunity of exhibiting his talents, by providing a dinner set out with no mean taste, as it consisted of every delicacy the season afforded, and many luxuries which the season did not afford ; and, to do great justice to Mr. Smart, he spared no expense in executing his commission, never considering his lordship's pocket of the slightest consequence when his own abilities were to be called forth upon the occasion.

After partaking very largely of the delicacies placed before her, Mrs. Bloomfield remarked that they were certainly much better cooks in Scotland than she had been taught to expect, having heard they spoiled every

bit of victuals that came into their hands, but for her part she was ready to contradict such an assertion the moment she should have an opportunity of so doing.

The colonel bit his lips in the expectation of hearing something more absurd from the mouth of his sweet Lucy, which the lady perceiving she became instantly silent.

The ladies, at the solicitation of lord Glenroy, retired to dress for the theatre; the external appearance of which, certainly did no justice to the interior part, for it was extremely elegant. The play announced in the bills of the evening, was Mr. Tobin's excellent comedy of the *Honey Moon*, in which the lively and fascinating Miss Duncan (now Mrs. Davison) performed her original part of *Juliana*. Whether in the accomplished character of the duchess or as the village maiden (the afterpiece being *Rosina*), she charmed most, we will not determine; but her enchanting songs drew forth reiterated applause from a generous and discriminating audience. The colonel, squinting through his opera glass, acknowledged in a whisper to lord Glenroy, that she was a prodigious fine creature. The ladies confessed that they had derived much pleasure from the spirited performance of the evening. The next day the earl devised fresh sources for their amusement; he ordered his barouche, and gave the ladies an airing to Musselburgh, where the prospect of the sea and the ships laying at anchor, presented a beautiful and picturesque scene. Returning by Leith, they took a view of that busy little place, and came back to Edinburgh just in time to visit the new town. Doctor Robinson remarked that Queen Street was one of the finest he had ever seen;

and the houses, all constructed on the most elegant plan, were certainly not surpassed, if equalled, by those of our great metropolis.

The ensuing day they visited Dalkeith, purposely to inspect the beautiful mansion styled Dalkeith Palace, the late residence of the most noble his grace the duke of Buccleugh and his amiable family, whose benevolent propensities are too generally known to need eulogium to illustrate virtues which have long since rendered them the chief ornament and blessing of the country round.

Lord Glenroy having remained in Edinburgh long enough to give the colonel's family the highest impressions of that city and its environs, now proposed to depart for his native mountains, and assured them that in conducting them to Glenroy Castle, he would arrive at the summit of his ambition. He hoped they would consider it as their future residence for many months, which he should use every exertion in his power to render pleasant and amusing. He then snatched Evadne's hand passionately to his lips, while he softly added—

“Would'st thou, Oh! blessing of my life! but smile on my efforts to make me happy, and I am blest indeed.”

Evadne did smile, and her face was covered with blushes, while she replied—

“Can you then think me so insensible as to be ungrateful for all your kindness? Believe me, my lord, I consider myself too insignificant, too unworthy, to merit such attention; and 'tis the consciousness of that alone which renders me silent.”

“Angelic creature,” returned lord Glenroy. “I

live but to deserve your approbation. You command my life, my soul, and all that I possess is at your disposal."

Evadne was silent and embarrassed. She felt how greatly she was his lordship's debtor in the sum of gratitude; how much she had profited by his kind attentions, and could not but acknowledge that the influence which he now held in her good opinion was hourly encreasing.

"To-morrow then, my worthy friends," continued lord Glenroy, "we will proceed to Glenroy Castle, but what shall we do with ourselves to night?"

"I could tell you," cried Miss Bloomfield, "that there is a certain amusement here to night called—what is it called, my lord?" and going up to his lordship with a very arch smile, whispered something in his ear.

"I am more than half inclined, Sophia," said his lordship, "to snatch a kiss for your pretty intelligence. An Assembly—what say you, ladies and gentlemen? what say you to the assembly this evening?"

"If Miss Le Burney goes I shall prohibit her dancing," said doctor Robinson.

But Evadne strongly declined going at all, adding, while a sigh accompanied the reflection, "Once, my lord, I loved dancing. I mean when I was very well in health, it constituted my favourite amusement; but now I feel I should be a very stupid object in an assembly room, for indeed no argument whatever could prevail on me to waltz or go down a country dance. Have the goodness, therefore, to excuse me, my lord."

His lordship looked a little grave, and shook his head.



“Nay, if you are angry you will compel me to go,” said Evadne.

“No, my best life, but I would persuade you,” returned the earl, “and I promise you I will not ask you to dance; do but accompany me there, ’tis all I implore, and I must now acquaint you with my motives for requesting it. My bonny countrywomen excel particularly in the accomplishment of dancing, and you will be delighted to see the variety of graces which they introduce into their simple Scotch reels.”

“I protest and vow I shall admire to see how they contrive to do it,” said Mrs. Bloomfield, “for do you know, my lord, when I was at a boarding school I never could learn them what do you call-em steps in all my life.”

“I credit your assertion, madam,” replied his lordship.

The colonel and doctor Robinson treated themselves with a stroll down Prince’s Street, but Sophia and Mrs. Bloomfield were closeted with an Edinburgh milliner. They were desirous of knowing the prevailing fashion which presided there, and a plaid silk drapery, richly ornamented with a border of painted roses, was purchased by the fond mother for this important evening, from which she augured future aggrandisement to her beautiful Sophia.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

The assembly was held at Corri's Rooms, and was crowded almost to suffocation. About half-past nine lord Glenroy conducted Evadne (whose deep mourning attire was only exchanged for one of black crape) and Sophia into the rooms; and the doctor and colonel took charge of Mrs. Bloomfield. It will be rude to remark, yet we know not how to avoid it, that, the extreme juvenality of this lady's dress attracted universal attention; the more, as the youthful Sophia was soon discovered to be her daughter. In her dress however, which she wore extremely open at the bosom with a profusion of rich white lace made in imitation of a girl's tucker, she certainly surpassed Sophia; and it is certain that, more eyes were directed towards her on that evening, than to any young lady, one only excepted, in the rooms.

A fashionable young baronet, well known to his lordship, stalked up to the side of the room where Sophia was sitting, and surveying her through his glass with the utmost nonchalance for a considerable time, at length groaned out that he should be happy to have the superlative felicity of her hand in the next reel.

Sophia blushing excessively declared her total ignorance of the Scotch dances.

"Oh! 'pon honor miss, I think them a cursed bore myself," exclaimed sir Leonie, "and I never trouble myself about them; and yet I contrive to figure away in them almost every night."

“What sir ! have you no knowledge of the steps,” returned Sophia.

“Steps miss ! do you think I could be bored with learning the steps ? no, that would be intolerable, ’pon honor. No miss, we people of fashion have no steps at all ; we swim up and we swim down again without having any method at all. Pray miss, have you learnt the swim ?”

“Sir !” cried Sophia, staring with awkward simplicity, “I don’t understand you.”

“Why miss, the swim is, the singular ;” returned sir Leonie, “and the singular is nothing more than to appear singularly ignorant of every thing one ought to know ; it occasions surprise, and get’s one talked of when nothing else will. Now miss I believe you comprehend me.” And sir Leonie rolled back to the other end of the room ; leaving the astonished Sophia to make what comments she pleased upon his very singular mode of describing fashionable propensities, we won’t call them absurdities for fear they should offend.

“What an infufferable coxcomb,” she exclaimed as soon as the earl joined her, “had I been aware of his impertinence at the first, I think I could have collected a sufficient quantity of brass to have paid him off in his own coin, with his swims and his singulars a conceited ape.”

“What poor devil has been so unfortunate as to fall under your displeasure my pretty Sophia ?” said lord Glenroy.

Sophia half vexed, though ready to laugh, related her rencontre with sir Leonie ; at which his lordship could not forbear laughing most immoderately, and

assured her that, a winter, even in Edinburgh, would bring her to the acquaintance of many such high-finished modern young gentlemen as sir Leonie Fluttergale; who, having crept from the nursery to his mamma's petticoat strings, had, under the tuition of a private master, acquired all that was necessary to lounge down Bond Street, or to qualify him for staring humble modesty out of countenance, and to bet largely at the card table, or a horse race; and while he pretended to fashionable manners, fashion disowned him for one of her votaries; no one admitting sir Leonie Fluttergale into their circles that knew how to value the real blessings of society."

The intense heat of the rooms had given to Evadne a vermillion tint that rendered her inexpressibly lovely; and as she leant on his lordship's arm with modest diffidence shrinking from the gaze of the multitude which surrounded her, a general cry of, "what a beautiful creature" and "who is she" resounded from all parts of the room.

Mrs. Bloomfield having risen from the card table (at which she had seated herself the greatest part of the evening) a considerable winner, now directed her eyes towards the dancers, and confessed she had never seen such dancing in her life-time. Doctor Robinson, who had likewise been very attentive, acknowledged that the Scotch ladies were pre-eminent in this accomplishment even if they excelled in no other.

Evadne looking excessively fatigued, though she had not partaken in the amusements of the evening, the carriages were ordered, and they quitted the rooms at half-past two o'clock. And during their ride home,

Sophia, amused her father with an account of sir Leonie Fluttergale, till the colonel's fat sides shook with laughter.

At seven the ensuing morning, every thing being prepared for their departure, they left Edinborough, and during their journey, the country, in some parts, presented the grandest and most sublime views they had ever witnessed. The cattle browsing on the tops of the mountains were every where seen in the greatest state of perfection ; flocks of the finest sheep, tended by the careful shepherd wrapt in his plaid, added to the variety of the scene, and delighted the travellers, as they beheld them from afar upon the sloping hills, or craggy precipices ; sometimes the mouldering ruins of an abbey caught their attention ; but nothing so completely amused the colonel and doctor Robinson as the Scottish dialect of the inhabitants of the little villages at which they stopped to refresh by way of entertainment ; where they beheld caledonian beauty perfectly without the aid of ornament ; eyes sparkling with good humour and vivacity ; cheeks displaying the ruddy rose of health ; and lips and teeth which many a fine modern lady would have envied them the possession of.

“ The lord be good unto me ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Bloomfield, as they stopped at a post-house, where a very pretty little Scotch girl came running out, “ what frightful long eared caps : I vow and protest colonel, that girl would be tolerable but for that odious mob cap.”

Mrs. Handy was making the same observation to Mr. Smart in the barouche.

“Lauk Mr. Smart, did you ever see such a cap! why, lauk a mercy, it looks for all the world like a sow with long ears.”

“You are monstrously comical Mrs. Handy,” replied Mr. Smart, “but every body is not born with such tasty notions as you Mrs. Handy.”

“Lauk Mr. Smart I vows you makes me blush,” returned Mrs. Handy with an affected giggle, “my mistress will have it, that’s for sarten, that I knows a bit of every thing.”

“I don’t doubt it in the least Mrs. Handy,” said the obliging Mr. Smart.

“Some people know more than they ought to do I believe,” observed old James very dryly.”

“Lauk how cross grained you be James,” exclaimed Mrs. Handy, “but as I was saying Mr. Smart, my mistress always says as how I was born in a higher spear.”

Here old James very rudely burst into a loud laugh, in which Hannah, who had sat very quiet till now, likewise joined; which so disconcerted Mrs. Handy, that, she remained silent to the end of the journey.

Lord Glenroy’s servants being apprised of his visit to the castle arranged themselves in pompous order to greet his arrival, and the castle gates were thrown open with loud buzzas to welcome their illustrious lord. The novelty of the scene struck the colonel’s family dumb, and highly delighted doctor Robinson.

“What a noble building,” exclaimed Mrs. Bloomfield, “my stars, Sophy, look at the images yonder! men and women all cut out in marble: I vow and protest they look as if they were coming to speak to us.”

The images which Mrs. Bloomfield so curiously alluded to were two beautiful figures of Hector and Andromache placed in the grand entrance leading to the hall. Within the hall were faith, hope, and charity, of the purest alabaster; and when they entered the saloon, which was hung with the richest tapestry representing the battles of the Scottish chiefs, its ancient grandeur and magnificence struck them with surprise and wonder. Several female attendants waited to conduct the ladies to their respective apartments, where they dressed for a late dinner. The chamber to which Evadne and Sophia were conducted was extremely elegant; and judging from its appearance, Evadne supposed it must have been previously prepared for her reception, it being hung with light blue velvet richly embroidered with white roses; the bed curtains were made to correspond with those belonging to the windows, which were of blue silk, ornamented with the most delicately shaded flowers: all the rest of the furniture was uniformly elegant and tastefully displayed.

“My dear young lady,” cried Hannah, “how happy you will be in such a paradise of a place: well, I always said you was handsome enough to be a queen; and you won’t be far off from it when you are my lady Glenroy.”

Evadne having finished her toilet, and scarcely noticing what Hannah had said, walked to the end of the gallery, which not only contained all the portraits of the Glenroy family, but likewise very valuable pictures executed by the most celebrated artists both of ancient and modern fame. Among the most admired, and that which fixed the attention of Evadne most

was, Eve relating her dream to Adam; under which was written,—

“ O thou in whom my thoughts find all repose.”

The countenance of Eve while yet in perfect innocence, as she leaned on the arm of Adam describing the terrors of her dream, was beautiful beyond expression; and Evadne could have gazed on it for ever had not she felt herself gently encompassed by the earl of Glenroy; hastily disengaging herself, she blushed excessively at the ardent and impassioned looks with which he regarded her, and apologized for the liberty she had taken by having entered through a private door into the picture gallery. His lordship smiled, and spite of her confusion, again snatched her to his arms; but seeing the colour mount to a deeper red, and her countenance betraying some displeasure, immediately relinquished his hold, while he uttered,—

“ Evadne, my soul’s darling, cannot be offended if her grateful and enraptured Glenroy presumes to hope from her heavenly smiles that he is not indifferent to her. Oh! Evadne! how can you thus cruelly protract my happiness, or am I now to suppose that you still cherish sentiments which ought long since to have been consigned to oblivion: is your whole life to be consecrated to the memory of—

“ Oh do not name him!” cried Evadne, turning pale, “ if you wish me to forget him, mention him no more!”

There was an affecting solemnity in her manner, and the earl paced the room in great disorder, passionately exclaiming, “ by Heaven! this is too much;”



and Evadne then addressed his lordship with calm composure, "I perceive my lord that I am so unfortunate as to displease you; but surely you seem to forget there is a proper consideration due to my situation (surveying her black dress) as well as to your own."—Here for a moment she paused; and with a deep sigh continued,—“ Henry Montreville, and I repeat his name for the last time, has not been dead one twelvemonth, spare me on the subject till then, and”——

“ You will be mine!” cried the now enraptured and exulting Glenroy, “ pronounce that word of extacy!—say that in a month after that period I may call you mine by the most enviable of all titles,—husband”.

“ I promise you my lord,” pronounced Evadne faltering.”

The earl’s fine eyes sparkled with a triumphant expression he could no longer controul,—“ Then I am blest beyond the reach of fate,” uttered he, “ and no power on earth can hereafter compel me to resign you!”

His lordship appeared at this moment agitated almost to fury as he uttered these words; and Evadne, terrified and surprised, gazed upon him with the utmost alarm and astonishment. Instantly softening his voice, and resuming his usual manner he approached her, and pressing her trembling hand to his lips, remarked with a smile that,—“ Men who passionately love knew not at all times what they were doing. And my angel must acknowledge that she transported me beyond the bounds of reason,” continued he, as he led her into a sumptuous dining room, which was prepared for an elegant entertainment.

Doctor Robinson observed, from certain changes in her countenance during dinner, that some particular conversation had been held between herself and lord Glenroy, who, notwithstanding he had declared himself to be transported, became suddenly abstracted in conversation ; would rivet his eyes for a considerable time on the varying countenance of the lovely Evadne, and turning away, sigh heavily, till perceiving he was observed, he would seem to recover again his usual spirits, and laugh and talk with increased animation. For several days, however, an unusual gloom pervaded the dark and penetrating features of the earl, and one morning a packet being delivered into his hands, he opened it in the presence of his guests, as they were seated at breakfast, and a deadly paleness overspread his countenance ; hastily apologising for being obliged to quit them, he retired to his own apartment, where he confined himself for many hours, and when he appeared again, he had by no means recovered his accustomed good humour or vivacity. This circumstance did not wholly escape the penetration of doctor Robinson, nor yet the observation of Evadne.

One evening when she had retired to her bed-chamber, she found her spirits uncommonly depressed, and, while ruminating on her situation, her heart ached with painful apprehension ; and the more so when she reflected on the violence of lord Glenroy's character, which could bear no comparison with the mild engaging disposition of her lost Henry, she thus exclaimed—

“ In a few weeks then, and this man will be the master of my fate. Should I ever be so unhappy as to fall under his displeasure, how fierce will be

his anger ; how dreadful his revenge ; how absolute his power to govern me. Alas ! when I think he is displeased, already do I shrink from his violence and tremble at his frowns."

From such reflections as these Evadne passed many a sleepless night in the castle of Glenroy. Not so Sophia and Mrs. Bloomfield, who were never weary of wandering over the magnificent apartments of the castle, of inspecting its rich furniture, and of searching into every hole and corner they could find worthy of their curiosity. One day they called Evadne to look at a portrait, which appeared to have been much neglected, placed behind the door of a small bedchamber ; its peculiar expression struck Evadne very forcibly as the most fascinating she had ever seen. It represented a young female not more than seventeen, beautiful in the extreme. Her flaxen hair shaded a complexion of the most transparent whiteness, and her dark blue eyes had a celestial mildness in them which was heavenly. " Surely," cried Evadne, " was that lovely being in existence, and looked as she does now painted on the canvass, where is the monster that could be found to injure such sweetness ?"

Mrs. Bloomfield declared she supposed it was his lordship's grandmother.

Sophia protested it was his lordship's mother.

" But my dear aunt this portrait is of a modern date," observed Evadne, surveying it again, " and I should much sooner have suspected it to have been lord Glenroy's wife.

" Lord child," cried Mrs. Bloomfield, " if that had been the case, do you think it would have been crammed up into that filthy corner ?"

To which Evadne replied with an involuntary sigh, "such a circumstance might happen; wives when living are too often neglected; we can hardly then credit that when dead they are treated with more respect."

"Pray child don't fill your head with such nonsensical fancies," returned Mrs. Bloomfield. "For in the first place his lordship is too sweet a man to neglect any woman; and I dare say in the next that he was never married."

"But intends shortly to be," archly remarked Sophia.

Evadne sighed; she looked on the lovely picture, and again she was fascinated; she observed written under it, though in characters hardly legible, "Louisa of Strathaven," and without taking any further notice, resolved to bear this name in her recollection.

They were then summoned to the grand saloon, where they found company had assembled. Sir George Courtney and lady Caroline, his sister: she was one of those fashionable ladies who consulted ease more than manners; and her character was exactly such as Miss Carter is represented to be in Mr. Morten's humorous comedy of *The Cure for the Heart Ache*. She was disgustingly familiar, impertinently officious, and insufferably vain. Sir George Courtney, with a fine manly countenance, was possessed of much vivacity and a great deal of good humour; and though his understanding was not of the finest order, he certainly inherited none of the malignant qualities of his sister's disposition; masculine in person as she was in manners, she introduced

herself to the colonel's family with a broad stare, and the following salutation :—

“ Upon my life, good people, you must take my visit to this horrid castle monstrously kind, for my lord knows I never could endure the sight of these frightful mountains, without being ready to expire with a fit of the vapours.”

“ Your ladyship is extremely obliging to honour us with so early a visit,” said lord Glenroy, “ and now, lady Caroline, allow me to present you to colonel and Mrs. Bloomfield, doctor Robinson, Miss Bloomfield, and Miss Le Burney, all of whom are my particular friends.”

Mrs. Bloomfield, Sophia, and Evadne, rose and courtesied to her ladyship ; but the colonel and the doctor, perfectly disgusted, returned but a slight inclination of their heads.

Lady Caroline now rose, and flinging her chair behind her, almost overturned the breakfast table, as she was striding across the room to where lord Glenroy was seated ; then squinting through her glass, she surveyed Evadne till she absolutely blushed at her effrontery, and then in a loud whisper to his lordship, she exclaimed—

“ That girl with the dark eyes is excessively pretty ; her face is quite in style à la Rubens, I protest ; and the other is not at all contemptible. Pray, my lord, where did you pick them up ?”

Lord Glenroy returned no answer to this very elegant mode of her ladyship's interrogation, but taking her hand, led her to the window, where they conversed apart. The colonel, in a low key, in the mean time

amused the doctor with the following observation, in which they were joined by Sophia.

"If these are fashionable manners," cried the doctor, "by Jove, colonel, they are the queerest that ever I witnessed in the whole course of my existence."

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## CHAPTER XXXV.



"She puts me in mind of Sir Leonie Fluttergale papa," cried Sophia laughing.

"Yes, she has got the swim with a vengeance," returned the colonel.

"And the singular no doubt is to follow," said Sophia.

At this moment Sir George Courtney entered the room : he had been with his groom to the stables and was but just returned. And now another introduction took place, which, on the part of Sir George, was unaffected, easy, and perfectly well-bred. He took a vacant seat next the colonel, and by his good humour and vivacity, amply compensated for the unfavorable impressions which lady Caroline had excited before he came in. She now seated herself beside Evadne, whom she declared to be a perfect model for a statue ; and whispering in her ear, gave her joy of having heard that she was soon to be created a countess:—

“For then you know my dear creature,” said she, “you will be one of us; till then I think I shall begin to put you in training.”

“Your ladyship is excessively polite,” replied Evadne, a little sarcastically, “but I believe I look upon your training to be a very useless accomplishment on my side; and I should certainly do no credit to your ladyship’s instruction, as I never intend to be a woman of fashion.”

“Never intend to be a woman of fashion,” echoed lady Caroline, “heavens, child! you have been barbarously educated. Your country misses are so horribly ignorant of polish, that, when you come to town you are so full of your squeamish notions, and so romantic and sentimental that, really child you are only fit for the shepherdesses of a century ago.”

Evadne’s colour brightened, but she made no reply to so malicious an observation; and lady Caroline continued:—

“Now my dear I can tell even your thoughts at this present moment.”

“Then you are probably not pleased that your ladyship happens to be the subject of them,” said Evadne, colouring still deeper.

“O yes my love,” replied lady Caroline, “I perceive that you are very angry with me; and I am actually pleased to find you have so much spirit. Positively I took you for Pigmallion’s beautiful statue when I came in; now I behold expression, animation, and what’s a pretty woman without them? so let us be good friends—meant no harm upon my life—you will be used to me in time—serve every body so I come near, the more I vex them the more mirth it occasions me—

that's my way—and so my dear rustic creature adieu ; I am now going to make love to your intended."

And away she scampered to the other end of the room, to the no small satisfaction of Evadne, who thought it would be a work of time to develop such a character as lady Caroline Courtney ; and no sooner had she quitted her than she forgot all the nothingness she had uttered. Sir George thought and gazed on Miss Le Brney as on a divinity ; but considering her as the bride elect of lord Glenroy, kept his admiration within the most respectful bounds. Besides, Evadne's pensive character was not entirely suited to his taste ; and he began to attach himself wholly to Miss Bloomfield, whose lively hoydon manners completely fascinated him ; and at the end of a fortnight he betrayed symptoms of a strong penchant for the colonel's pretty daughter ; which, on the part of Sophia, was perfectly reciprocal, Sir George being exactly the man after her own heart.

The company at Glenroy Castle now began to divide themselves into little parties ; lord Glenroy, Evadne, and doctor Robinson ; the colonel, Mrs. Bloomfield, and lady Caroline Courtney ; and Sir George and Sophia rode out together on horseback every morning. What soft things Sir George contrived to say to Sophia on these occasions we know not, but it is believed that the colonel received certain hints from him which he did not by any means reject ; and he was soon admitted and acknowledged the lover, and looked upon as the affianced husband, of his pretty daughter. Lady Caroline too made use of some methods, namely, presenting Mrs. and Miss Bloomfield with some handsome trinkets, as slight memorials of her



regard, to render her manners less disgusting than they had been on a first acquaintance. And her ladyship continued her new style of polishing manners by uttering innumerable rude things without giving the least offence to her auditors.

With Evadne however, lady Caroline was generally more reserved; who being already the object of her envy, she soon became the object of her hatred. But her malevolence towards this lovely creature often received a check when in the presence of lord Glenroy; and her tongue was awed into silence when she perceived the homage which he paid to his young and lovely affianced wife. With others, however, lady Caroline was always listened to with attention, and laughed at behind her back.

It was on the first morning in the month of July that Evadne, in compliance with the earnest request of lord Glenroy, threw aside her mourning habiliments, and appeared at breakfast in a plain robe of the purest white. Nothing could look more beautiful, and no one could be more truly unconscious of it than herself. The earl saluted her as she came in, and led her in triumph to a mirror which reflected at full length her light and aerial figure.

"Now my angel," cried he, "you are yourself again, and without the aid of ornament, are more beautiful

"Than painting can express".

"Or

"Youthful poets fancy when they love."

exclaimed lady Caroline Courtney; and turning to

Sophia, observed "that his lordship made himself perfectly ridiculous, that it was an absolute bore to be sounding in every creature's ears such extravagant praises of his pretty piece<sup>o</sup> of still life. Positively," continued her ladyship, "'tis enough to surfeit one, and remember child that another morning I bring down my *sal volatile* with me, for if his lordship goes on at this rate there will be no enduring it, I shall be ready to faint."

Sophia, who envied her beautiful cousin, could have heartily joined in this sarcasm, but was well aware she durst not without hazarding the earl's displeasure; she thought it more prudent, therefore, to remain silent till his being absent would give her an opportunity to express her malignant feelings, which were considerably increased by Sir George Courtney having more than once remarked, that Miss Le Burney was indisputably the most lovely woman he had ever seen.

While Sophia was cherishing in her bosom sentiments which rendered her disgraceful to her sex, the unconscious object of her envy was partaking of her breakfast with a cheerfulness and sweet serenity of countenance which she had not shewn since the commencement of her mourning for Henry Montreville, and the delighted lord Glenroy obtained her consent to meet him in his library at twelve o'clock, after which they proposed taking an airing in his lordship's carriage, accompanied by the worthy doctor Robinson.

As Evadne was returning to her own apartment, her ear was assailed by the harsh tones of Mrs. Bloomfield's voice in the act of reprimanding her favourite, confidential, and obliging Mrs. Handy, for the commission of some unpardonable fault of which it appeared

she had been guilty ; Mrs. Bloomfield addressing her in language which would have disgraced Billingsgate even in the sprat season.

“ Get out of my sight you filthy slut, get out of my sight you stinking jade ; tramp I say, you most abominable shameless hussey.”

Mrs. Handy now fell on her knees, and in doleful accents uttered—

“ As I hopes to be saved, mem, I never had sich a miss fortén happen to me afore, and if so be as how Mr. Smart will keep his word and marry me, why I do hopes and prays mem that how your ladyship will forgive me, seeing as how I was never so overcome afore mem.”

Mrs. Handy having made this eloquent oration, rose from her suppliant position, and began to wipe her eyes with her apron, but the efforts she made to excuse herself only served to add fuel to fire, in the enraged eyes of Mrs. Bloomfield, who continued to load her with the bitterest invectives, concluding her last sentence with the following consoling assurance—

“ Do you think, hussey, your sinful soul will be saved ?”

“ I do hopes and prays so,” whimpered Mrs. Handy.

“ You lie, boldface,” returned Mrs. Bloomfield, “ you are a lost sheep for ever.”

“ Oh ! dear heart what will become of me,” cried the affrighted abigail, and at this instant Evadne, who had stole softly up stairs with the intention to intercede for Mrs. Handy, gave a gentle tap at the door, and Mrs. Bloomfield became silent, but poor Handy, screaming as loud as her lungs would let her, exclaimed,—

"He's coming, he's coming; Oh! dear heart, the devil is coming sure enough."

Evadne now put her head in at the door, and, in spite of her anger, Mrs. Bloomfield could not help indulging herself in a hearty laugh.

"Mrs. Handy I dare say you may go down stairs, and my aunt will talk to you some other time. Will you dismiss Handy, madam?" cried Evadne.

"Aye, let her go about her business," cried Mrs. Bloomfield; "but I'll be bound, niece, if you knew how much the hussey is in fault, you would think I had reason enough to be angry with her."

Mrs. Handy had by this time withdrawn, and Evadne, who had heard only part of their conversation, had no idea of the extent of Mrs. Handy's indiscretion.

"Indeed aunt," said Evadne, "I hope you will be induced to pardon the poor girl, as I heard her say it was her first fault, and she seems very penitent."

"First fault," echoed Mrs. Bloomfield; "first fault indeed, why niece you don't seem to know what you are talking of; why the wench is—I protest and vow I blush to tell you, she is with child!"

"With child! madam," said Evadne, shocked and surprised. "Is it possible under this roof any of his lordship's domestics should have dared to injure an innocent girl, and forget that respect which was due to their master and his guests."

Mrs. Bloomfield then observed that she had for some time remarked an unusual rotundity in Mrs. Handy's shape; she had likewise noticed some familiarities with Mr. Smart, which she did not deem exactly proper; and perceiving her roundness every day to increase instead of diminishing, had resolved

that very morning to question her on the subject, and had extorted from her a full confession of the nature of her indiscretion. She then declared she should immediately acquaint his lordship with the whole affair, and that either Mr. Smart should resign his place or be compelled to render justice to Mrs. Handy. With this declaration Mrs. Bloomfield flounced out of the room, and Evadne repaired to the library to keep her appointment with lord Glenroy. Her heart beat with redoubled violence when she perceived he was already there, and she timidly pronounced as she approached him—

“ I hope, my lord, I have not given you the trouble of waiting ? ”

“ No, my best life, and if you had, I think I could have been persuaded to pardon you,” cried he. Perceiving her agitated, he continued, “ Evadne, why are you thus alarmed ? Heaven is my witness how ardently I have wished for the commencement of this day. I behold it with rapture, and hail it as the auspicious omen of the felicity of my life. Tell me then candidly, Evadne, do you in any degree partake of those transports which at this moment possess my whole soul ? or does Evadne retract her promise given on this day month to her enraptured Glenroy ? ”

Evadne now covered with blushes replied—

“ What proofs, my lord, have I given you to tax my conduct with such inconsistency ? ”

“ Oh ! your excessive agitation. This tremor on your spirits, his lordship answered—

“ May be a proof that I possess feeling,” returned Evadne, “ but it can give you no right to suppose that I intend to deceive you ; nor will I ; therefore,

my lord, while I have the power to call my words and actions my own, I request you will have the goodness to hear me. Should any act of my life hereafter occasion your displeasure, among the number of my faults you will not have to charge me with duplicity. If you can accept a hand which has not either high birth nor fortune to recommend it to your notice, it is yours; if you can receive a heart deeply wounded in its first love, and which can never cease to throb at the recollection of the object it once adored, that is likewise yours; and if after this confession you can regard the woman who feels it necessary to have no disguise in the present moment of communication, why then I am truly yours, and the study of my whole life will be devoted to your happiness."

Lord Glenroy's countenance became pale when Evadne first addressed him, but at her concluding words, so sweetly, so modestly, and so ingeniously delivered, he brightened up, and he exclaimed in the most animated tones—

"One kiss, my angel, to ratify this blessed contract, which here I swear shall never by me be broken by unkindness and reproach. Oh! my Evadne, I am so supremely blest in calling you mine for ever, that I envy not that human being in existence," and he imprinted a kiss on her glowing cheek. He then quitted her for a few moments and returned with the colonel, who sung, danced, and cried all in a breath, and declared that the completion of his every wish was now accomplished; that his dear Laura's child would be countess of Glenroy; his darling Sophia would be the wife

of Sir George Courtney, and that he himself stood a chance of being made a great uncle and a grandfather all in one year. This observation heightened the colour in Evadne's cheeks, but the colonel would have his humour, and continued to raise much mirth at the expence of the intended brides and bridegrooms in the course of that day.

The very moment that Mrs. Bloomfield could procure half an hour's audience with lord Glenroy, she related the sad mishap of Mrs. Handy, and the fruits which were likely to be produced from the gallantry of Mr. Smart, which so highly incensed his lordship that he determined to dismiss him his service immediately ; but a thought occurring that it would not be the most likely way of redressing poor Handy's wrongs, he resolved he should make instant reparation by marriage ; and Mr. Smart was summoned to appear before his Lordship, who fell on his knees and confessed the impropriety of his conduct in the most submissive terms, declaring that, with Mrs. Bloomfield's approbation and the earl's consent, he was ready to lead Mrs. Handy to the altar whenever they should be pleased to appoint ; on which his lordship was induced to seal his pardon, and he was dismissed, though not without a very useful sermon being preached on the impropriety of his conduct, with a caution to avoid such indiscretions for the future. This business being finally settled to the satisfaction of all parties, the earl was shut up a considerable part of the evening with his lawyer, who drew up a deed in which it appeared that his lordship consigned to Evadne the sum of four thousand pounds to be annually paid into her own hands for the residue of her life, commencing on the day of her mar-

riage, and at her demise was to devolve to her children. This settlement was signed and sealed in the presence of colonel Bloomfield and doctor Robinson, who acknowledged, however lovely and amiable the object on whom it was bestowed, that it was the most exalted and liberal mark of his lordship's affection, and the strongest proof of attachment that could be given to the woman whom he loved they had ever yet witnessed.

His lordship was indulged with Evadne's company alone about an hour before supper, in which short time he made use of the most persuasive language to induce her to fix an early day for their marriage. She blushed and was silent; but the earl continued to plead his cause so powerfully, and informing her that it was the intention of his friend Sir George to commence bridegroom at the same time, she without further hesitation named the ensuing morning, at which his lordship threw himself at her feet, declaring he was the most enviable of mortals. Before the supper was quite removed, the joy which beamed from every countenance, the malignant lady Caroline alone excepted, was very soon remarked by those who waited at table, and the news spread like wildfire through the castle of Glenroy.

Mr. Smart hastened to Mrs. Handy with the intelligence, who received it with many a sly leer and tempting smile, the meaning of which was perfectly understood by Mr. Smart, who chucking her under the chin, acknowledged that he had not the least objection to follow his lordship's example. "For you know, Handy," cried he, "like master like man."

"Well, you may be like your master, that's for



sarten," returned Mrs. Handy, "but I am sure I a'nt a bit like my old frump of a missuss."

The bell now rung, and Smart scampered up stairs. Candles were ordered in the back drawing-room, and thither the four gentlemen repaired, leaving the four ladies to consult on matters that required very serious deliberation, namely—what was to be the colour of their wedding dresses.

Mrs. Bloomfield was now in her element, and pouring out a glass of wine, she first saluted lady Caroline, who was not in the sweetest of all tempers, with, "Come here's your ladyship's health, and who knows now the ice is once broke, as the saying is, what may follow: better late than never, an't it my lady;" and, too highly pleased to remark her ladyship's sour looks, drank off her glass. Sophia was obliged to have recourse to her pocket-handkerchief to hide a laugh which she found it impossible to restrain; and lady Caroline ready to expire with rage, knew not how to contain herself within bounds; and finding a fit of hysterics coming on, took out her bottle of salts. Evadne who imagined that her ladyship was really ill, rose from her chair to assist her with that gentle sweetness for which she was remarkable when, lady Caroline pushing her from her with the greatest rudeness, bawled out,—“Keep your distance—shan't come near me—you are all monsters—all barbarians—you have no nerves—no tender, delicate sensibilities.”

Mrs. Bloomfield was rather rough in her retort upon her ladyship, for placing her arms a kimbo, she made use of the following expressions in addressing her.—

“I don't know what the devil your ladyship means

by calling us monsters and such like names; but I'd have you to know my lady that, I was born in a christian land as well as yourself, and I think, for the matter of that, you had better look at home. Monsters indeed! I vow and protest I never heard the like in my born days."

Evadne now again mildly interposed, "pray dear aunt, pray lady Caroline, let me beseech you for your own sakes not to let this difference go any further. Sophia why don't you assist me, and persuade them to have peace? Remember that to-morrow is my wedding-day.

"And my wedding-day mamma," cried Sophia, "and I am sure nothing should put you out of temper when you think of that: come lady Caroline be good honoured."

"Then why does she study ill-natured frightful old sayings on purpose to torment me," pouted lady Caroline."

"Oh, the gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Bloomfield, "now I can see it as plain as a pike staff, your ladyship was offended because I happened to say"—

"Pray mamma don't say any more," said Sophia.

"Well, I have done, I shan't say any more, not another word, and provided my lady is agreeable to do the same why there's an end on it," returned Mrs. Bloomfield.

Lady Caroline very condescendingly put up her bottle of salts and began to shew symptoms of returning good humour, not chusing a second time to attack Mrs. Bloomfield with her own weapons, clearly perceiving that, her antagonist, from the slight specimen

already given, was as well fortified with the powers of speech as herself.

Harmony being once more restored, and the gentlemen returned to their society, this little fracas was totally forgotten through the exhilarating smiles of the earl and the good-humoured vivacity of Sir George Courtney, whom we shall both leave, as they went to bed in the pleasing contemplation of the happiness which the eventful morrow was to bring forth, while we return to the lovely Evadne, now arrived at the most awful and critical period of her existence.

The doubtful scale in which misery or happiness is thrown contains many blanks and prices; and even they who win receive the dear-bought treasure with trembling hands, uncertain how long they may be able to possess it unembittered by the evils of human life. Shuddering at these reflections, Evadne, with a dread on her spirits which she had never before encountered, dared not investigate the nature of her feelings, which tended too strongly to remind her of departed happiness with an object she had adored. She however acquired sufficient resolution to take from her bosom the picture of her lost Henry Montreville without casting her eyes once on the dear resemblance; and hastily depositing it in a cabinet she thought secure from sacrilegious hands, murmured a short but fervent prayer to that being, without whose aid all mortal power is ineffectual; and without whose knowledge human actions cannot be achieved, whether tending to promote virtue, or inclining to evil propensities.

Miss Bloomfield was the first up and dressed of the youthful brides. Elegantly attired in white sarsenet,

and her waist, neck, and arms richly ornamented with pearls, she tript down stairs light as the gossamer, where Sir George impatiently waited to receive her.

In a few minutes lord Glenroy triumphantly led forth the blushing Evadne. Her dress was a plain white cambric muslin; and a white rose which his lordship had gathered and placed in her bosom, was the only ornament which could be discovered about her. Her luxuriant dark hair was, as she usually wore it, braided in the Grecian style. But to do ample justice to her lovely countenance as it varied every instant through the agitation of her spirits is impossible. Doctor Robinson thought that, unless ~~she~~ she became more composed, a little of his assistance, as well as advice, would be essentially necessary; and he determined to place himself as near her as he possibly could both before and after the ceremony had taken place.

At length the carriages appeared to convey them to his lordship's chapel; and now they began to form a procession of equal sized boys and girls who were the first in the groupe, and whose occupation consisted in strewing fresh gathered flowers from the castle gates to the entrance of the chapel. The concourse of people which lined each side of the pathway was innumerable. In the first carriage was the earl and, for the last time we shall call her so, Miss Le Burney; the second, Sir George Courtney and Sophia; the third, the colonel and his highly delighted Lucy; and the fourth carriage contained the Doctor and lady Caroline, who, on this occasion, proved a most vivacious and pleasant companion: for the present, all ill-natured reflections were confined to her own bosom,

from whence they were only to escape at particular periods.

During the ceremony the paleness of Evadne's complexion proved her to be near fainting; but the assistance of Doctor Robinson, who kindly supported her and exhorted her to cheerfulness and resolution, was extremely beneficial at this trying moment; and in a tremulous voice, but with the most solemn emphasis, she pronounced "I WILL." The irrevocable sentence had now passed her lips, and the remainder of the ceremony was excellently performed by the reverend divine, who, having concluded the service, offered up a short but eloquent prayer that, their days might be long and prosperous, and their felicity rendered complete by a fruitful and happy union. Sophia went through her part with infinitely more spirit; and the earl and Sir George, first saluting their youthful brides, returned, as may naturally be supposed, happy and transported bridegrooms to Glenroy Castle: where we will leave to the imagination of the reader what rejoicings, what mirth, what revelling, what feasting, and what dancing crowned the remainder of this so long expected and eventful day.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

Four months now glided imperceptibly away, and lord Glenroy in the possession of Evadne appeared to be the most enviable of human beings. Sometimes he would fix his eyes on her as if his happiness increased by gazing. Nothing indeed could raise her higher in his estimation than the system of conduct she invariably adopted. She was neither too fine a lady to be totally unmindful of her household concerns, nor yet so great a slave to its exertions, as to forget the formalities which were now due to her rank and exalted station. There were times when society claimed a precedence to all other pursuits; and though not absolutely compelled to devote herself to study, yet she found conversation could possess but few attractions either in public or private circles where the uncultivated mind presented a blank. Thus did the countess of Glenroy contrive to blend instruction with amusement, and domestic and religious duties; so that when she became more generally known, she was estimated as a very extraordinary creature, and a very unfashionable character in the beau monde. Lady Caroline had often insidiously remarked where she visited that, it was hinted, the earl's pretty wife was highly romantic; and that being the case, the poor creature was infinitely to be pitied for being so monstrously absurd and so excentric in her notions. This intelligence agreeably surprised some crest-fallen duchess; and lady Caroline's discourse was greedily

devoured by the green and envious girls who had heard of the extreme beauty of lady Glenroy. But the tale gained no credit with the judicious and liberal few, who, having once seen and conversed with the countess, instantly pronounced a favorable judgment of her character, and generously acknowledged that they had seldom before witnessed so great a superiority of beauty blended with such engaging sweetness and humility.

Sir George Courtney had removed to his own mansion, accompanied, for the present, by the colonel and Mrs. Bloomfield. Courtney Hall was a very beautiful estate not many miles distant from the castle, so that they became, through fashion's sake more than esteem, constant visitors at Glenroy ; where they were always certain of seeing personages of the most exalted rank and station paying their devotion at the shrine of beauty, grace, and virtue ; which was the appellation now generally bestowed on the beautiful countess. But the earl was soon displeased at the marked adulation which every where followed her ; and at last proposed that, they should only visit with a few select parties ; declaring he had seen enough of fashionable society to live for ever secluded from its baneful influence. Holding out such arguments to his lovely wife of the way that fashionable couples lived, and of the ruinous consequences which too frequently ensued from such examples, her delicacy was shocked, and her timid fears alarmed lest the earl might imagine she entered with too much spirit into the gay scenes which so splendidly surrounded her. With a sweet sincerity of expression she openly avowed her objection to the crowded parties which every night appeared at the

castle ; acknowledging, while truth marked every turn of her lovely fascinating countenance, that no additional society was necessary to render her more truly grateful for the blessings she enjoyed, nor could any company be more agreeable than his own. The earl passionately embracing her exclaimed—

“ Oh, loveliest angel ! you are indeed all that my fond heart can wish ! but, do I hear right ! can my Evadne indeed relinquish that society she was born to adorn ? can she so early sequester those beauties in solitude ? Oh ! can she hide those charms from all the world, and in retirement confess that she is happier with Glenroy.”

The countess, with an artlessness which at times was familiar with her, fixt her dark eyes on those of the earl, and placing her arm gently through his, softly pronounced—

“ Where should Evadne rest her hopes, center her wishes, or fix her happiness but in the confidence and affection of her husband.”

The action was beautiful, and it is needless to add, the raptures, the panegyrics which were uttered by the earl on the occasion ; but from that very hour the castle was, from a theatre of fashion, converted into a friendly meeting ; and no male or female was ever admitted within its walls whose characters bore the smallest approximation to licentiousness. The sudden dismissal of many at first occasioned surprise, and some mortification ; but was soon forgot by attributing motives to his lordship’s conduct which were very foreign to the real cause that had induced him to dispense with their visits ; and the subject after being canvassed by the fashionables till something more



novel engaged their attention became a nine days wonder and was thought no more of.

Evadne in her now elevated station never forgot (for with some people short memories are usual on these occasions) that she had once been an orphan dependant on the bounty of her uncle, and the propensities of her nature led her to follow the precepts of christianity not in theory but by universal practice. The unfortunate never told their tale without being compassionated ; and the poor never begged without relief from her benevolent hands. It was her delight to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, and comfort the sick ; and when in the presence of lady Caroline and lady Courtney she would often extend her bounty to the mutilated seamen who implored her pity at the castle gates, they would endeavour to ridicule her charitable disposition. Lady Caroline in particular always concluding that she was monstrously absurd ; her character indeed she dared not impeach, as she perceived it to be a standard of such excellence, and her lord so completely adored her, there was not the most distant prospect that she could ever succeed in defaming her. All therefore lady Caroline could do was, the poor satisfaction of remaining sullenly silent whenever she heard the countess praised, which was frequently the case, as her liberal donations to those whom she had relieved from the lowest depths of poverty and sickness, had registered her name on the tablet of the grateful heart too strongly ever again to be obliterated.

One morning as the earl and countess sat at breakfast (the worthy doctor Robinson having quitted them with the intention of soon re-visiting Scotland again)

they were surprised by seeing lady Courtney's carriage drive down the avenue; and it being but ten o'clock, were at a loss what cause to attribute so early a visit to. Presently they beheld lady Caroline, not lady Courtney alight, and with her usual elegant and easy mode of striding into the room she thus accosted them.

"Your long-winded staircase is positively enough to annihilate one. Can't wait a moment—have not time—full of business—receive company at one precisely—the Courtneys insist on your accompanying me back to the hall, where we are going to have such sport! glorious sport, I promise you. Sophia and Sir George declare they won't be denied the pleasure of your company, so allons—you know I am always in a hurry—I wont, no I wont positively wait longer than ten minutes."

"But, my dear creature, said the earl, what, may I ask, is the glorious sport you allude to? Have you got a favourite monkey in training? or an exhibition of something more wonderful?"

"Something more productive of amusement than you can possibly imagine," returned lady Caroline. I protest I can hardly get it out without being ready to expire with laughing, but this animal is nothing more than a poor devil of an authoress who has been for this month past pestering lady Courtney and myself with letters for patronage and subscription money and so forth. She has now actually had the audacity to beg an audience to read her poems, I think she calls them, which she humbly presumes (mark the affected humility of the creature) to hope will be deemed worthy of our ladyships' attention, so out of a bit of sport, you know, Sophia and I answered

her pathetic letter, signed "RHODA GURNEY," and by way of diversion have ordered her to come to the hall to read her nonsense; and do you know that the creature never once suspects that we are only going to quiz her. She is positively coming; can any thing be more delightful? Lady Courtney has actually sent cards round to all her friends, that is to a few particulars, to come and witness this extraordinary and whimsical exhibition.

"And has Sophia really done this?" exclaimed lady Glenroy, shocked and disgusted at such wanton cruelty of disposition. She would have inveighed most bitterly against such proceedings, had not a thought occurred that by her so doing she might probably lose an opportunity of being serviceable to the unfortunate object of their derision, whom before she beheld she determined to befriend; she therefore accepted the invitation with evident satisfaction, and his lordship, who sought not to enquire why or wherefore she went, declared he should be happy to accompany her. The countess now rung for Hannah, and desiring her to bring her down a veil, threw it over her beautiful face, and prepared to follow lady Caroline, who was all impatience to be gone; but observing the unadorned and plain dress of the countess, she stopped short, and with a sarcastic smile observed, as she applied her glass to survey the lovely and perfect form before her—

"Well, I vow and protest, lady Glenroy, you are the most singular woman in existence; and positively if you did not look so provokingly handsome in dishabille, you would be monstrously laughed at for dressing so frightfully plain; but, good Heavens! you

beauties can take any shape you please, so come along."

The countess made no reply to these observations, dictated by pure envy, but his lordship could not resist a smile, as jealousy sat triumphant on the fallow countenance of lady Caroline, and in spite of the finest and most delicate rouge, with the united assistance of Gowland's Lotion, Parisian Cream, Oriental Wash, and a thousand other nameless washes besides, her complexion could bear no comparison to nature's pure red and white in the glowing cheeks of Evadne. The sight was suffocating, and the window was opened to give her ladyship air, as she declared the heat was uncommonly distressing. The earl smiled again (methinks his lordship was somewhat rude), and remarked, it appeared very extraordinary that the ladies, now indulging themselves by wearing apparel more calculated to give one an idea of what had formerly been worn by their mother Eve, could have any reason to be eternally complaining of heat. This observation was a very pointed one of his lordship's, and, gods and goddesses! lady Caroline Courtney blushed, as well she might, at the almost transparent drapery which shaded indeed, but by no means concealed her bosom. With one of those horse laughs, however, which she generally introduced when put to her last shifts, and which she styled extremely fashionable, she exclaimed, looking through the window—

"Oh! merciful Heaven! there is that frightful old crabbed monster, Sir William Harman. Pray, my dear lord, don't let him see you, for if you do, the wretch will insist on going with us to the hall, and I shall be ready to expire if he does. Oh! he is the

vilest cynic! the most insufferable old animal in creation!"

Hardly had these words escaped her ladyship's lips, when Sir William, mounted on horseback, his groom following, rode up to the side of the carriage, and bowing to the earl, heartily congratulated him upon his marriage, declaring that he had long been anxious to pay his respects to him and his fair bride, and he was now happy at the meeting which this opportunity afforded him. The earl returned Sir William's salute most cordially—had long known and admired his singularities, which tended only to rail at folly and ridicule fashionable vices; and perhaps there was not another being at this juncture whose conversation was so grateful, and whom he would so willingly admit to his society, as Sir William Harman. 'Twas in vain, therefore that lady Caroline drew up her head and looked cold and repelling. Sir William not deigning to make her ladyship of the slightest consequence, dismounted, and desiring his groom to lead his horse round to Courtney Park, jumped into the carriage. He now nodded to lady Caroline, who scarce returning his salute, looked out of the window.

"I am used to your sour looks but don't mind them," observed Sir William; then turning to the earl, and now and then riveting his eyes on the mild seraphic countenance of the countess, became silent till they reached the park, where Sir George appeared with his usual good humour to welcome his guests. Sir William was too perfectly well known to wait for, or intreat, much ceremony, as he very composedly walked into the drawing room and seated himself before he attempted to recognise any part of the com-

pany, just nodding to the mistress of the house as he entered in the same way he had done to lady Caroline.

Sophia had since her marriage become so fine a lady that, she scarcely ever stirred but from her drawing-room to her carriage; and her disposition never amiable, was rendered still less so, now that she had an opportunity of exercising an unlimited authority.

When Miss Bloomfield, she had been a spoiled child, and the difference was only this, that now she was a spoiled wife; and the natural bent of her extravagant and thoughtless mind exhibited itself in a thousand little absurdities, as detrimental to the fortune of Sir George, as they were obnoxious to society. Had Evadne been still the poor Orphan depending on the bounty and protection of her father, she would never have been noticed by the fashionable lady Courtney; but the case was widely different with the countess of Glenroy, she was now necessary as an acquaintance; and still more eminently raised in rank and fortune than herself was the idol of an admiring world. Lady Courtney's doors therefore were always open to receive and welcome her dear cousin; and when Evadne entered the drawing room, she was happy publicly to declare that, the beautiful countess was her relation. While lady Courtney was going round the room with this general information, Sir William Harman suddenly exclaimed, after gazing intently on Evadne—

“ Can't give credit to it—no <sup>such</sup> thing—don't see any resemblance whatever.”

Mrs. Bloomfield, who happened to be seated next to him, bridled up and confirmed what her daughter had just been asserting that, it was well known the countess

of Glenroy was her neice; and that it was hard indeed if people were not allowed to know their own relations."

"By Jove, madam!" returned Sir William, "but the case is much harder when poor relations are unacknowledged and treated with contempt by rich ones: and this too is one of fashion's blessed laws—the blessings of refinement: compared to which the peasant's hut is paradise, and its inhabitants are angels to those devils. Please to remark madam, I call those fair creatures devils who invert society and invent odious customs and barbarous habits to establish their new school for fashionable refinement."

Poor Mrs. Bloomfield was struck dumb; and Sir William might as well have attempted to talk algebra to her as to have made her comprehend a syllable of what he had been saying.

At this instant the door opened, and a servant announced the arrival of Miss Gurney the poor authoress, to see whom the company had been previously invited, and were to partake of an entertainment perfectly of a novel kind, which was to conclude, in lady Caroline's own words, with a delightful hoax against this unfortunate daughter of the muses. Lady Courtney, smothering an affected giggle, and without rising from her chair, desired that Miss Gurney might be instantly admitted.

Some few boarding school misses and old maids had their eyes riveted towards the door upon the stretch of curiosity to see the animal, as they termed her, make her first appearance into a room, but with few exceptions, of an admirable set of quizzes. The compassionate heart of the generous countess ached for the

stranger's reception, who would now be exposed to the animadversions of such inhuman wretches (for what can be estimated more unfeeling than to betray an inclination to sport with the feelings of the unfortunate) and she turned her eyes with increased anxiety to see her come in, determined to befriend her to the utmost extent of her power, and to fly to her assistance should their brutality go so far as to insult her.

At length the phenomenon appeared; but, Oh! how crest-fallen were the disappointed looks of some malignant spirits, when, a female, not more than thirty, habited in deep mourning, entered the splendid apartment of lady Courtney. Her figure was delicate and graceful; and her pale countenance, and emaciated looks were expressive of the deepest anguish; while her fine dark eyes, although they did not shine with brilliancy, had yet a language in them so expressive of a great mind and a noble heart struggling with worldly affliction yet bowing with patient submission to the will of providence, that, no hearts, but those present, could have dared to insult her respectable feelings, or have implanted a sharper thorn than that which poverty had already inflicted. A hectic of a moment passed her cheek as she addressed the haughty and unfeeling lady Caroline; and when she timidly cast her eyes round the room and surveyed the motly group, she shrunk back from the humiliating and painful task necessity had imposed on her.

“Well, Mrs. or Miss what-d'ye-call-em—bless me, how forgetful I am,” cried lady Caroline, “your name I think is Gurney.”

The stranger bowed her head, and bowed gracefully too, to the no small astonishment of her disappointed



ladyship ; who found if she went on in this manner, there would be no fair opportunity either of hoaxing or quizzing this helpless female, she therefore, with a supercilious smile, continued—

“ Well little Miss Sappho, where are your patheties.” This speech, uttered in a tone of the greatest irony, produced a titter among the misses :—“ but apropos,” continued the inflexible lady Caroline, “ before you begin to treat us with your rhapsodies, you had better go down stairs into the kitchen and desire the cook to give you something to eat, for positively, by your thread-paper appearance, you don’t seem to have tasted a morsel these six months ; or camelion like, perhaps you feed upon air Miss Sappho.”

Here the giggle was exchanged for a horse laugh ; and her ladyship now in hopes that a general quizzing would soon take place, perceived not that the emotions of the trembling heart-broken stranger prevented her from making a reply.

Sir William Harman, whatever were his thoughts, sat a silent spectator of a scene which appeared to engross his whole attention ; but lady Glenroy with much difficulty repressed the indignation which she felt towards a conduct, which, she conceived, had arrived at the highest pitch of barbarity ; and she would instantly have quitted Courtney Hall in disgust, had not motives of humanity and the strongest compassion withheld her.

The pallid cheek of the wretched poetess now glowed with dignified resentment, and with trembling hands she drew from a little green bag the manuscript of her poems ; but her voice faltered, and she turned pale as she cast her eyes upon the title-page,

"We are all attention," cried lady Caroline, "and now without further preface begin, pray do, little Miss Sappho. Come let us have proper emphasis and discretion ; but I had forgot to ask an essential question. Are your castles flying in the air ? or are they built on some enchanted rock ? have they blue tongues and flaming nostrils ? are your nymphs half mermaids and your swains demi-gods ?"

The quizzers were now almost convulsed with laughter, while the manuscript dropped from the trembling hands of the poetess, and in a voice scarcely audible, she pronounced—

"Madam, you confuse me ! you afflict me : you insult me !"

"Pray, Miss Sappho, be so good as to proceed," cried her ladyship, not appearing to notice the words she had uttered : but this unfortunate daughter of the Muses, clasping her emaciated hands together, feebly articulated, "Father of Mercies. support me !" and burst into an agony of tears.

"Unfeeling woman !" involuntarily escaped from the lips of lady Glenroy ; but Sir William, making but one step from his chair to where the poetess stood, gently forced her to sit down, and taking hold of her hand, while he flourished the other, in a threatening position, at the astonished and malignant lady Caroline, whom most of the company were now beginning to condemn for depriving them of the great sport they expected to see, he addressed them in the following manner ;—

"Monsters ye are all ! therefore we can expect no mercy at your hands. There is not one of you, that lovely lady excepted," and Sir William pointed to

lady Glenroy, " who inherits a heart capable of feeling or relieving human misery." I imagined, ladies and gentlemen, that I was invited to a merry meeting, and the smiles of that she-devil, pointing to lady Caroline, made me enquire into the cause of such extraordinary mirth. I was presently told by the lady of this mansion, that I should shortly be gratified by an exhibition of a new and whimsical kind."

Here lady Courtney actually blushed, and betrayed no small symptoms of shame and vexation ; but in spite of her evident confusion Sir William proceeded.

" When my eyes encountered this poor woman in affliction, my indignation became excessive on learning the charitable purpose for which she was invited hither. Call you this refinement ? is inhumanity then become a species of amusement ? or can sporting with the feelings of a fellow-creature be estimated as a feather in any of your caps ? Oh ! shame ! shame ! shame !"

Surprise, astonishment, and confusion, pervaded the drawing-room of lady Courtney ; some of the company had already disappeared, and others, calling for their carriages, precipitately rose to depart ; lord and lady Glenroy alone remained. , Sir George, still preserving his good-humour, while he severely reprimanded lady Caroline for the unwarrantable liberty she had taken with the afflicted stranger, he approached lady Glenroy, and assured her that he had not the remotest idea of the scene his sister had so shamefully prepared for them, and hoped that Miss Gurney would accept of his sincerest apologies for the affront which she had received ; then taking from his pocket-book a ten

pound note, entreated that she would consider it as subscription money for himself and lady Courtney, for two copies of her poems."

"To which I most willingly add ten pounds more," cried Sir William, presenting Miss Gurney with the money, "and hope, Madam, you will do me the favour to accept it, though it is by no means a compensation for the impertinence you have received in this house ; yet I believe truly, from the bottom of my soul, that Sir George was not in any degree the instigator of it." Here Sir William thought proper to dart a most reproachful glance at lady Courtney, lady Caroline having already retired to her own apartment in a violent fit of hysterics ! No language can do justice to the gratitude which now expressed itself by a rich glow in the countenance of the poor poetess. She rose from her chair, but her trembling limbs could scarcely support her ; she essayed to speak, but her voice died away in broken murmurs ; and totally overpowered by such unlooked for kindness, she again burst into tears. The humane countess entreated lady Courtney to ring for a glass of wine, while she herself supported her head on her bosom, and used every consoling power to recover her."

" Blessings on your angel goodness," cried the delighted Sir William ; " but who is there could mistake the sweet expression which beams from that benignant countenance. I am an old man, madam, and cannot flatter, but if I were a young one, this action of yours would tempt me to say a number of civil things. How unlike the new school is all this condescension, this perfect charity ; and give me leave to tell you, madam, that the snowy whiteness of your lovely bosom

will never look less fair because you have supported on it a daughter of affliction."

This well-directed compliment occasioned the lovely countess to blush excessively; but it was most truly gratifying to a doating husband. Their attention was now directed to the object of their compassionate solicitude, whom nothing could prevent from falling on her knees before them. With clasped hands she implored the Father of all Mercies to shower down blessings for their liberal donations; she kissed the hands of lady Glenroy; she breathed her thanks in such pure, fervent, and eloquent gratitude, that the countess declared she could not part with her so hastily, and begged she would favour her with a few minutes private conference, which was immediately complied with on the part of the grateful poetess, who bowing to Sir George and her more than benefactor Sir William Harman, followed the countess into another apartment, when lady Glenroy in the kindest manner, entreating her to be seated, thus addressed her—

"Believe me, madam, far otherwise are my motives than idle curiosity which induces me to request you will hereafter favor me with something more than the slight knowledge I now possess of you; and whatever your situation, I am sure I cannot err in the judgment I have formed of you. If, madam, you have any skill in delineating the human countenance, you will perceive how much my heart bleeds at your distresses; in pecuniary embarrassments I have at least the fortunate power to relieve them; be so good then as to accept the enclosed, which was a Bank bill for twenty pounds, and do not forget that there is yet another

being besides Sir William deeply interested in your misfortunes, who will glory if she can in any degree lessen those frowns which fortune seemed to have persecuted you with. Farewell, madam, be comforted, and let me hear from you at an early opportunity."

"Angels of Mercy ever bless you," piously ejaculated the deeply penetrated poetess, following the countess with looks of unspeakable admiration. "Know that when that beauteous head reclines this night upon the pillow, your charitable hand has restored to the blessings of light and liberty an aged, helpless, and imprisoned father, whose only means of sustenance has been derived from the labours of my feeble pen; and whose precarious scanty pittance depends on the efforts of a heart-broken wretched daughter."

"Your father in prison?" echoed lady Glenroy. "Oh! how great must have been your sufferings; and I fear you have not sufficient to alleviate his wants and your own."

"More than enough, benevolent angel, for both of us," exclaimed the grateful poetess. "I shall see my father freed; I shall behold tears of joy once more steal down his aged cheek—I shall kiss them off—and, Oh! bounteous Providence! shall snatch him from the cold walls of a damp prison, to breathe the blessings of light and liberty."

Here the poetess sobbed out an adieu, kissed the extended hand of the countess, and with the alacrity of the nimble-footed hind, quitted the inhospitable mansion of Courtney Hall, and hastened to supply the wants and relieve the anxious fears of an almost expiring and famished parent.

Lady Glenroy returned to the drawing-room, the tears not yet dry on her lovely cheek ; she related her affecting conversation with the poetess with a warmth and energy which rendered her a thousand times more bewitching in the eyes of her enraptured husband ; and no less so in the estimation of Sir William Harman, who declared to the earl that an angel was descended from the skies to revive a picture of the golden age.

At the very pressing solicitation of Sir George and his repentant lady, they stayed to dinner, but departed at an early hour, accompanied by Sir William, for Glenroy Castle.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.



To give our readers a little insight into the character of Sir William Harman, we will first inform them that he possessed a large fortune, independent of every other consideration, and was what was generally termed a free-thinker ; but notwithstanding a few singularities of disposition, his heart was the seat of every virtue. He had acquired the appellation of sour old crab among the fashionables, because he freely censured whatever he thought improper in their characters, and he never failed to tell them of it at a seasonable opportunity. He was deprived at an early period

of his life of the woman of his choice by one of those insects of fashionable folly who flutter round beauty; and Sir William from that moment became the avowed censurer of the fairest part of the creation, except where goodness, humility, and modesty, were alone predominant. He had now arrived at the mature age of forty-nine, without having once thought or even dreamt of changing his condition; yet, strange to say, although he was the character described, he was every where admitted into the first circles of fashion; and though dreaded, nay often hated, yet his singularity attracted universal attention, and being a man of large property, he had free access to every house whenever he chose to become a member of their parties. From the moment that he had beheld the countess, he became strongly prepossessed in favour of a set of features which bore the semblance of perfect purity; but the propensity of kindness which she had afterwards shewn towards the poor poetess, raised her in his esteem to a standard of unrivalled excellence; when, therefore, the earl invited him to the castle, he accepted his invitation with great satisfaction, and during their ride from Courtney Hall, proved a most excellent and facetious companion.

The first intelligence the countess received on her arrival at home, was that Mrs. Smart (Handy having been joined in wedlock a month before) was brought to bed of a fine girl. Lady Glenroy having given orders that nothing should be wanting that her situation required, passed a most delightful evening of rationality in chearful converse with Sir William and her lord; but more than once in the course of that evening had the interesting Miss Gurney become the



object of her contemplations. She thought she beheld her with her imprisoned father exactly as she had described ; and the reflection that she had contributed to relieve his wants, and imparted a ray of comfort and hope in the care-worn-bosom of his daughter, gave her sensations of the most pleasing kind.

About a fortnight after this, when the countess was enjoying the cool breezes of a sweet autumnal evening, her mind occupied with reading Scott's beautiful *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, she was interrupted by Hannah, who came to inform her that a lady in mourning had requested that her name might be sent in, and waited to know if her ladyship would admit her.

“ Is her name Gurney ? ” enquired the countess.

“ Yes madam,” replied Hannah, “ that I think is the name she sent in ; and poor soul, as far as I see, all is not right with her, for she looks sadly grieved, and spoke so mild that I came running to tell your ladyship ; and now I suppose I may send her in ? ”

“ Delay not a moment,” cried lady Glenroy, throwing away her book. “ If it is Miss Gurney, at all times she is welcome ; she is the child of misfortune, and who can tell but she is now suffering under some new affliction. Hasten, Hannah, and conduct her hither.

Away went Hannah and presently returned leading in the poetess, but, Oh ! how changed, even in the short space of time since she had beheld her.

“ You have I fear been ill,” said the countess, offering her hand most cordially to receive her, “ or some greater calamity has befallen you : pray, pray be seated.” And Hannah brought her a chair. Miss Gurney with difficulty pronounced “ My poor father”

and burst into an agony of tears. Lady Glenroy now guessing at the full extent of her misfortune was silent, and the poetess greatly agitated continued,—“My poor father, madam, is no more. He lived but a week—excess of joy is sometimes more fatal in its effects than grief—he lived but a week to partake of those comforts your charitable hand prepared for him, and died in these arms, murmuring blessings on your name and prayers for his child. Had he been spared a little longer to me, I think the cup of my afflictions would not be quite so full, but now”—Here the wretched Rhoda sobbed aloud, “I only live to deplore the loss of all I loved on earth.”

Lady Glenroy greatly affected endeavoured to console Miss Gurney for the loss she had sustained, but she found her spirits by no means equal to the task; recollections painfully revived in her own bosom of what she herself had once endured, and tears, which she could no longer restrain, fell fast on her beauteous cheek. Miss Gurney perceived that she was wounding a heart too feelingly alive to sensibility, and threw herself at the feet of the countess, she implored her to forgive her for the cruelty she had been guilty of in terms at once delicate and effecting.

“I see madam,” cried she, “I have been the miserable cause of exciting some painful emotions in the gentlest bosom in existence. Oh! pardon me most adored, most angelic lady: I would sacrifice my life to serve you. Smile but once more and the unhappy Rhoda will never again intrude her sorrows on a heart so kind and tender.”

“Should I smile, will Rhoda cease to be unhappy?” cried the countess, affectionately embracing her, “will

she in my society promise to forget her sorrows, and in my abode accept an asylum from the oppression, from all the evils of a base and cruel world?"

"Oh, matchless excellence!" exclaimed the poetess, "Oh, pattern of universal benevolence! how shall I find words to express my thanks! Can you indeed condescend to honor with your protection a miserable outcast of society, an unhappy Orphan? can you receive to your hospitable mansion the daughter of a debtor? can you do this? Oh! my bursting heart, my transports are too great for utterance."

"You are the daughter of virtue, you are the child of affliction, and that is sufficient; your countenance confesses it, and my own heart avows it; therefore I intreat you to be composed," said the countess, rising from her chair and ringing the bell, "you will consent to remain with me Miss Gurney, will you not?"

"First teach me madam to do something worthy of your protection," said the poetess, "place me in some capacity where I may be of use to you, and you shall command every future moment of my grateful life."

"We will talk of that hereafter," said the countess, but now I shall present you to my husband and Sir William Harman who is here on a visit to us as my future protégée: though, upon my word, I think I am arrogating much to myself when I say that, for, indeed, my dear Miss Gurney, I am a very inexperienced creature in this great world, and feel at a loss what conduct to adopt that may be termed sufficiently proper to lead me through its intricate mazes. You, perhaps, my amiable friend, may be able to instruct me."

"Ah! madam," cried the poetess, all the lessons which you could possibly acquire can never render you

a more perfect creature than you now are; and knowledge of the world is often bought with dear experience and an aching heart."

The countess evidently stifled a sigh which was but just beginning to rise in her bosom as Hannah appeared to answer the bell.

"Is Sir William and my lord returned," said the countess.

"Yes madam," replied Hannah, "and have desired me to say that they wait your presence in the green drawing room."

"Come then Miss Gurney," cried the countess, "do me the favor to accompany me, and set your heart at rest, in the assured conviction that, under this roof you will not encounter a lady Caroline, nor yet a lady Courtney; and if by chance they should make their unwelcome appearance and break in to interrupt our social converse, they dare not a second time insult you with impunity: come then Rhoda; come my protégée." And the countess smiled with resistless fascination as she took the hand of the pensive poetess.

"Lovely incomparable woman!" exclaimed she, as she followed the countess through an elegant suit of rooms to the green drawing room, where she was cordially greeted, and most welcomingly received by the earl and Sir William Harman.

"Behold gentlemen," uttered the lovely countess gaily, "I charge you to take notice that, from henceforth and for ever more, I have enlisted this lady under my banners; therefore she can be nothing less than aid du camp you know."

The earl smiled and imprinted a kiss on the lovely hand which she held out to him; while Sir William

snatching the other declared that, though a duel should be the consequence, he would have a kiss of one hand: so saying he respectfully raised her ladyship's hand to his lips, which met with the most perfect coincidence of the earl.

They now partook of tea and coffee; and while they introduced general subjects of conversation, prevented Miss Gurney from reflecting too intensely on her delicate situation. When her spirits were more perfectly tranquilized, they agreed to listen to any communication she might have to favor them with respecting her affairs; but, at present, the countess forbade her to mention a word that would be a tax on her sensibility. The next morning his lordship's steward was despatched to Jedburgh to the lodgings of Miss Gurney, with orders to convey all her effects to Glenroy Castle, and to execute all other commissions she thought proper, or might be necessary respecting the affairs of the deceased Mr. Gurney.—

“Let not motives of delicacy my dear Miss Gurney,” cried the countess, “withhold you from being explicit, and by so doing, deprive me of the pleasure of serving you. The happy advantages which I fortunately possess would to me be nothing could I not see more human beings besides myself benefited by it: command then any sum of money your circumstances may require and it shall be immediately given you.”

The grateful poetess declared that, her ladyship's munificence had already supplied her necessities; and that her father's creditors having been sufficiently compromised with, they possessed no further claim on her. The countess not being perfectly satisfied with this account, gracefully slipped twenty pounds into

the hands of Miss Gurney, and left her alone with the steward to issue what further orders she pleased saying that,—“When she had dismissed Jenkinson, she would wait for her in the pine grove.”

If any of our readers have felt the sensation arising from the commission of a benevolent action, they will be the best judges of what passed in the gentle bosom of lady Glenroy as, seated on a bench under the shade of some beautiful elms she drew forth her favorite Minstrel, and was attentively perusing its contents when she was joined by the poetess, and a most interesting conversation took place.

The countess was soon confirmed in the opinion that, Miss Gurney merited all the favorable impressions she had conceived of her; for her accomplished mind discovered itself in every thing she said or did; she read, she wrote, she conversed with ease and elegance; and her observations were those of a chaste, a correct, and enlightened understanding. Nor is it to be wondered that the countess, charmed with the society of her new and amiable companion, forgot that there existed such beings as lady Caroline and lady Courtney, whom she but seldom visited since the colonel and Mrs. Bloomfield had returned to England. The earl too had confessed to his Evadne that, he was equally pleased with the mind, morals, and manners of Miss Gurney, whom he considered as a great acquisition to his family; and this lady became shortly so great a favorite with Sir William Harman that, his visits to the castle were more frequent than ever. At one time he had the misfortune to strain his thumb; it was attended to, and gently bound up by, Miss Gurney; another time, while on a visit at the castle,

he was suddenly attacked and confined for many weeks with the gout; the person to whom he uttered his complaints, and who listened most patiently to the recital was, Miss Gurney. If a medicine was administered which required much care and attention, nobody could do it so well as Miss Gurney in his mind; no, none but this very identical Miss Gurney. And once the countess heard him repeat in the pine grove as he communed with himself, and as she came suddenly upon him.—

“Zounds, she’s not handsome! but, by Jove, when she asks me how I find myself after I have had a cursed twitch of the gout, there is something very pretty in the turn of her mouth. She is not young either, that is, not very young; but what does that signify; she can’t be called old, and she is vastly gentle and engaging. Then her sweet voice too! zounds, what am I about! Oh, William Harman! William Harman! this dear little bewitching poetess has played the devil with you!”

Lady Glenroy now softly approached him, and gently laying her hand upon his shoulder exclaimed—

“My dear Sir William you have chosen a most unfit place for study, where you are likely to be interrupted every five minutes: however, I admire your subject, believe me.”

“And who told your arch ladyship that I was studying,” replied Sir William, “now do I look like an author?”

“But your thoughts were nearly allied to an authoress; deny that too if you can,” said the countess.

“Why your ladyship is a witch,” returned Sir

William, "a beauteous witch. Well, well, it is all under the rose: nobody else heard me." And away he trotted off with a wink and a nod, which was sufficiently understood by the countess; who perceived his growing attachment to her protégée with the liveliest satisfaction. She was now so essentially necessary to her happiness that, she imparted her inmost thoughts to her, and the most delightful intercourse commenced between them; resulting from two hearts of the most refined sensibility, and from dispositions very similar to each other in mild and charitable propensities.

A twelvemonth had now rolled away since the poetess had become an inhabitant of the castle of Glenroy in undisturbed tranquillity. Their visits to the hall were less frequent than ever; lady Caroline and lady Courtney not chusing to associate with a person whom they thought so infinitely beneath them; bestowing the most contemptible epithets on Miss Gurney, and passing the most severe criticisms on the conduct of the earl and countess for admitting her into their family. They were not however attended to; nobody troubled their heads about Miss Gurney whom lady Courtney was so ready to defame; she was a person living in lord Glenroy's family; was the avowed companion of his amiable countess, and they concluded she must be a respectable character. It was shortly whispered about that the fortune of Sir George Courtney was, by the thoughtless extravagance of his wife and sister, receiving some very severe shocks. Lady Courtney had produced a fine girl and boy since her marriage, but she had consigned them wholly to the nursery from the hour of their birth; and was too fashionable a mother to suffer them to engross too



much of her attention. Poor Sir George was blind to all her faults ; and he permitted the reign of government to go so completely out of his hands that, he had become a mere cypher in his own house ; and even the very domestics were taught to consider him but second in command. To the feelings of Sophia's character may justly be ascribed the fatal effects of the excessive and improper indulgence of her parents ; for with the true spirit of her termagant mother she possessed not a single virtue which belonged to her father ; and with such an example constantly before her as lady Caroline, it is no wonder that, her weak mind fell an easy prey to her evil propensities : she was indeed her exact copy in all that was unamiable ; and it was shocking to reflect that there was yet another object likely to be contaminated by her pernicious counsel in the person of the little Sophia, who would imbibe from infancy all that her mother and aunt chose she should adopt.

In the several free and undisguised conversations which passed between the countess and Miss Gurney, the days of her infancy were revived, and her heart's first dearest treasure, the name of her once adored Henry Montreville trembled on her lips ; by degrees, however, she imparted to the sympathising confidence of the gentle Rhoda all the history of her attachment to that ever-to-be-regretted youth, and the many struggles her heart underwent before she could admit a second object in her thoughts. She related her illness ; she painted in glowing colours the strong and ardent attachment of lord Glenroy ; of his unremitting attentions towards her, and concluded by saying—

“ Tell me Rhoda, friend of my heart, do not disguise your sentiments, but frankly own, would you not

have done the same? could you have withstood solicitations so strong; attachment so ardent? does not the earl merit all the returning kindness I can shew him?

“ Oh! most truly so,” returned Miss Gurney, “ and is not my sweet friend amply justified;—is not his lordship the most attached and amiable of husbands?”

They were now seated in the pine grove; it was evening; and all was calm and serene: not a breeze stirred to ruffle the sweet tranquillity they enjoyed; yet a deep sigh which seemed to burst from an agonized heart was distinctly heard at the very moment that Miss Gurney uttered these words. The countess, pale and trembling, exclaimed—

“ Did you hear nothing Rhoda?”

Miss Gurney with wonderful presence of mind replied—

“ Yes, but nothing that can give you a moment’s alarm. Some of the servants, or probably some stranger has been admitted to walk through the grove; you know the earl allows that privilege to the porter at the lodge, and that frequently company visit the park.”

“ True my friend,” returned the countess shuddering, “ but I confess I was dreadfully alarmed. It was a sigh the most piercing I ever heard; and even now it penetrates my heart.”

“ Do not think of it,” returned Miss Gurney, drawing the trembling arm of lady Glenroy within her own as they arose to depart, “ come, thank heaven, no harm can now assail us, for here is the earl and Sir William coming towards us.”

“ Upon my word ladies,” cried Sir William, “ if you wander out so late in the evening, I shall expect to hear that some knight-errant has ran away with you.”

"These are not the days of chivalry," observed Miss Gurney.

"No madam, but there are knight-errants notwithstanding," replied Sir William, "whom I should hope, are always ready to protect the fair."

"We believe when Sir William uttered this he very gently (we won't be certain) squeezed the hand of Miss Gurney; what effect it produced in her gentle bosom we cannot pretend to say, but certainly it was not of anger."

A little cheerful conversation soon dispelled the gloom which shaded, for an instant, the lovely features of lady Glenroy; and her mind which had never been weak, or superstitious, dwelt not too strongly on the incident which had excited her fears in the pine grove. She slept in peace; and her pure thoughts were the harbingers of refreshing dreams.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.



"Lady Glenroy was one morning compelled to listen to some very heavy charges brought in by Hannah against the refractory conduct of Mrs. Smart, who ever since she had been so fortunate as to acquire that title by a lawful claim, had given her tongue so much liberty that, she had become a nuisance to all the servants in the castle; and had that very morning created such a dis-

turbance that, they one and all, issued a complaint to Hannah, in order that it might be conveyed to their lady; declaring they could no longer endure the intolerable insolence of Mrs. Smart: who it seems, having lost her child by the small pox, and thereby all future hopes of preferment in the castle, was continually wrangling with her good-natured spouse and finding fault with her place, at which many words arose on the part of her husband; and being thoroughly convinced that, all her sound arguments could not prevail with him to quit the service of lord Glenroy, she vented all her ill humour and impertinence on her fellow servants; declaring, that, she would not be domineered over by never a cross old toad living; and for her part, she knew of a place where servants might do just as they pleased; and that it was worth twenty such at the castle. With similar observations she concluded her last sentence by saying, she did not come there to wait upon beggars; for what was that Miss Gurney but a beggar. Upon this, Hannah reprimanded her most severely, declaring, she would immediately acquaint the countess with her audacity; but Smart, snapping her fingers, exclaimed—

“I don’t care that for you, and you may tell your lady I don’t value her place not a brass farthing. There is my lady Courtney a finer lady by half than she, and will give me twice as much to go and live at the Hall.”

“You are a trumpery good for nothing baggage,” cried Hannah, whose face was now in a perfect blaze, “and lady Courtney and my sweet lovely mistress are not worthy to be named in the same day.”

Mrs. Smart now returned a horse laugh full in Hannah’s face, which so provoked the honest creature

that, away she went, piping hot to the countess, and related the whole of her grievance.

“And would you believe it madam,” cried she, she has dared to mention Miss Gurney in the most disrespectful terms; she called her—I am almost ashamed to repeat it—but she has had the insolence to call her a beggar.”

“Then,” said lady Glenroy, “she quits my service immediately; this last piece of presumption determines me to part with her. On no account shall she remain another night under this roof; let Jenkinson pay her wages; and tell her to be gone. Insult Miss Gurney! believe me, they who insult that lady, or in any shape whatever offer her the least disrespect, shall no longer continue to be servants of mine.”

Hannah heartily glad to be rid of such an unwelcome guest, with no small joy testified on her countenance, returned to the kitchen to execute her commission, but, behold! the bird had flown! decamped with bag and baggage—desiring her husband to receive her wages and send them to Courtney Hall. She acquainted him she had hired herself to lady Courtney; that it had been all settled for several weeks back; and that she had bred a disturbance on that morning purposely, to be revenged on that old fright Hannah; and wishing him much joy in her absence, had set out for the Hall to take possession of her new place, which was a very lucrative one, to the no small delight of her now happy spouse who had long been disgusted with his helpmate, and ashamed of her ungrateful conduct.

The motives of Smart's conduct were, however, fully explained; the countess soon after learning that

she had been very frequent in her visits to the Hall, where she enjoyed many an afternoon's chat, and had retailed many a piece of scandal over a dish of tea with the loquacious abigail of lady Caroline Courtney. Lady Glenroy therefore was at no loss to account for the airs which she had so lately given herself; all which she had acquired in the fashionable academy of Courtney Hall.

The wintry season had now commenced, yet the inhabitants of Glenroy Castle enjoyed a delightful intercourse of society, which the departure of summer by no means rendered less attractive. Sir William would sit whole evenings by the fire-side enchanted with some new charm which the poetess every hour discovered of a mind richly stored with useful and ornamental knowledge; and she proved to her young and lovely patroness not only a firmly attached friend and engaging companion, but a most able instructress. In addition to the peculiar gift of a fine understanding, she united the advantages of a liberal and useful education; and her station in life had been such as to call forth every exertion of her abilities. Her acquaintance with the world, and the hard lessons she had acquired in the school of adversity, had taught her to represent mankind as they really were, with no false colouring, no romantic enthusiasm, but with a correct and chastened judgment guided by experience. She selected the best both of ancient and modern authors for the perusal of lady Glenroy; and while she delicately blended her own thoughts upon their own merits; corrected all that seemed erroneous in the vivid imagination of her youthful friend; she opened a field of

knowledge to the expansive mind of the countess without appearing to have been her instructress; and when she beheld with delight the advantages it produced, never ascribed any part of that merit to herself.

Sir William read the poetical compositions of Miss Gurney with enthusiasm; and as he traced the native energy and pure simplicity with which they flowed, stood amazed that she had not gained a higher reputation as an authoress in the great world.

“Why you write like an angel my dear madam,” uttered he.

“But I lived like a poet,” replied Miss Gurney, something like a tear moistening her fine intelligent eyes, “I was miserably poor sir, and my poetical bantlings were starved to death as soon as they beheld the light. Had I been rich indeed, the booksellers shops would have teemed with them; for how often after having fagged whole days, and even nights at the labour of my pen in order to procure but a scanty meal for my poor father and myself, have I been informed by these folio gentlemen that nobody would read nobody’s works\*—‘You must get a name madam,’ cried they. To which I replied, and have I not been doing that for a period of twenty years. ‘That is not sufficient,’ retorted they, ‘you must get a title. A titled author’s works will always sell though every page were a volume of folly.’”

“Is it indeed possible?” exclaimed Sir William.

“Oh! possible as true;” replied Miss Gurney. “why that nobody is a bug-bear, and frightens even

\* A recent fact.

patronage away. I once recollect to have solicited a celebrated duchess to honor me with her name—she not only rejected my humble suit herself, but induced others to imitate her charitable example merely, I suppose, because I was nobody.”

“Your remark, though severe, is, I fear, a just one,” replied Sir William, “yet you should not have desponded. There are, thank heaven! many existing characters which may yet be found in the higher ranks of life whose natures are ennobled by humanity; and who, when led to the impulse of a benevolent action, will not inquire whether the object is known, or not known: want, my dear madam, has a passport to the feeling heart, whose claims can never fail to be admitted.

It was easy to perceive that Sir William in his conversations with the poetess, evinced no small symptoms of an attachment, which, of late, he had taken but little pains to conceal; and it now amounted almost to a declaration. Often when seated in the Pine Grove, or sometimes indulged with her company alone in the drawing room, had his conscious tongue been on the point of saying,—“Madam, will you marry an old man who loves you, and will endeavour to make you happy.” But some conversation had always intervened to put aside the so much wished for explanation on both sides; for Miss Gurney felt she could be extremely happy with such a man as Sir William Harman. The days of youth’s fantastic colouring were fled; the delirium of love had long since subsided in her bosom, and reason was substituted in its stead. She now looked for the society of a rational companion more than the uncertain rhapsody of a lover;



and she was not to be cheated into the belief, or flattered with the illusion that, her person possessed those attractions at thirty which it had done at twenty. But when seated beside Sir William, the juvenality of her slight and delicate figure, often made her appear much younger than she really was ; and then he always felt ashamed to acknowledge that he intended to woo the fascinating Rhoda for a wife.

The happy fireside party was one evening disturbed by the sudden appearance of Sir George Courtney, whose countenance, pale and disordered, betrayed the most dreadful agitation and alarm. He threw himself into a chair, while he pronounced—

“Glenroy, I am a ruined man!—my estate is mortgaged!—my children are beggars!—and my wife I fear the unhappy cause of all!”

The earl and countess, and even Sir William Harman, expressed the greatest astonishment and concern ; and Sir George continued,—

“In addition to these misfortunes, my sister yesterday morning eloped with an Irish fortune hunter, a captain Oriel, whom she had lately made an acquaintance with and persuaded to marry in the supposition of her being possessed of a large fortune, when you I believe know Glenroy that, all she inherited from my grandfather’s estate was, the sum of seven thousand pounds, which sum she has long since made shift to disencumber herself of, besides her being in my debt to the amount of three thousand more. Read this paragraph and conceive my situation thus overwhelmed as I am every way by family misfortune and impending ruin.”

Sir George now handed a newspaper out of his

pocket to the earl and he read as follows :—" **This morning at Edinburgh we learn that captain Fitzpatrick Oneal, a gentleman, as well known on the turf as in the field of Mars, led to the hymeneal altar the beautiful and accomplished lady Caroline Courtney, the only surviving sister of Sir George Courtney, of Courtney Hall. It is supposed that captain Fitzpatrick Oneal will inherit a fortune with lady Caroline of considerable extent; which circumstance will prove an agreeable surprise to many of his Bond Street acquaintance, and to his long attached friends at St. James's.**"

" **Wretched woman! what will become of her,**" exclaimed Sir George.

" **Pardon me Sir George,**" replied, Sir William, " **when I say she is totally undeserving of your regard, much less of your commiseration. Has not her thoughtless extravagance been the destruction of your house and family; has not her pernicious example, her contaminating principles alienated your wife from the discharge of every domestic duty, and even estranged her affections from her children.**"

" **True, true, Oh! it is all true,**" exclaimed Sir George, " **fool that I was to marry a thoughtless inexperienced girl! but my children, who are the innocent sufferers, what is to become of them?**"

" **Oh! do not afflict yourself thus,**" cried the ever gentle Evadne, " **let but Sophia reform her conduct, let her but feel how much she has wronged her dear babes by the pursuit of thoughtless dissipation, and your children, Sir George, shall ever find a friend in me and my dear lord.**"

" **And, by Jove! the chubby little rogues shall never**

want while Will Harman can command a shilling," said Sir William in his usual blunt style.

"Worthy inestimable friends!" repeated Sir George, "how much am I indebted for such liberal sentiments. I am but too conscious that the conduct of my unhappy misguided Sophia must long e're this have excited your disgust; but Glenroy, she is the mother of my children, and I cannot treat her with severity."

"Nor shall you my fine fellow," exclaimed Sir William, "your wife may repent; but hark ye Sir George, that sister Carey of your's never will; she inherits the true spirit of a vixen and will support it to the last."

"I fear so indeed," returned Sir George.

The earl now ventured to inquire with much concern how far his estate was mortgaged, and to whom.

"Jenkinson will inform you," replied Sir George, "for the Gentleman who supplied me with the money, no less a sum than twenty thousand pounds, I do not know even by name. Jenkinson informs me that he comes here to night or to-morrow, either, as he supposes, to have the money reimbursed, or to sell the estate. Oh! my friends! I cannot look back upon my inconsiderate conduct but with the deepest regret; it is I alone who, surely, have been to blame. I should have remonstrated with my wife; I should have pointed out the folly of keeping up appearances when we could no longer support it without ruin, disgrace, and penury."

Here Sir George became greatly affected, and the earl and Sir William bound themselves to pay off the mortgage to the gentleman who had accommodated

him with the above mentioned sum the instant he should demand it.

“And I,” cried the countess, “I am sure my dear lord will permit me, will give a thousand pounds to my favorite little Sophy, and another to your infant son George. What say you my lord?”

“Follow the divine propensities of your nature my Evadne,” said lord Glenroy, “and you can hardly fail to insure, not only my warmest approbation, but to fix, if that be possible, more strongly my regard.”

Oh! she is an angel, if ever a true semblance of one yet existed on earth,” cried Sir George, “and merits, not only my warmest my heartfelt gratitude, but my children shall be taught to bless their benefactress in their prayers.”

“More than sufficient my good sir,” cried the countess, gently placing her lovely hand on Sir George’s lips, “happy creature that I am to have the power to render my friends comfortable; but I will positively not be made a vain one: for look there,” and she pointed to the earl, “there is the sole author of all this great pretended merit of mine. To him I am indebted for the means of imparting all my little store of comforts to those who have them not; and I won’t be praised singly good folks I assure you.”

The look which accompanied these words, as she bent her lovely eyes towards her husband, was beyond expression charming; and he caught her in his arms, as he prepared to quit the room with Sir George Courtney and Sir William pronouncing—

“How every word continues to charm, every action to penetrate, my soul. Evadne, thou art the dearest treasure ever man was blest with: how great his pangs

who feels he must relinquish thee by that destiny he must perforce obey !

As lord Glenroy uttered these strange incomprehensible words, a peculiar expression, which the countess could not by any means define, appeared in the countenance of lord Glenroy ; he trembled—for a moment he turned pale—but as suddenly recovering, departed with Sir George and Sir William for Courtney Hall.

“ It is very extraordinary Rhoda,” said lady Glenroy as soon as they were left alone, “ that I have often seen my husband thus ; he does not appear to be unhappy, and yet his countenance is often overshadowed with a deep gloom, the mystery of which I cannot even surmise.”

“ You should not permit such thoughts to take possession of your mind my dear friend,” replied Miss Gurney.

“ Why, have you not sometimes remarked that he changes colour ; that his penetrating eye is often fixed on mine with such expression that, did I not know how ardently he loves me, would make me tremble,” returned the countess.

Miss Gurney was silent, and lady Glenroy continued—“ Rhoda, you make no reply.”

“ Because,” answered Miss Gurney, “ I would not have my amiable friend indulge in unpleasing, nay, what is most probable, unjust surmises.”

“ Oh ! there indeed Rhoda you wrong me,” replied the countess, “ I cherish not a thought, I entertain no suspicions, detrimental to the character, the firm faith and true affections of my lord ; at the same time, I will frankly own to you Rhoda that, I often ascribe these sudden starts of passion to the recollection of some

former attachment, which time has not yet obliterated from his memory."

"I will not listen to you on this subject," said Miss Gurney, your breast is at present the seat of every gentle, every tranquil virtue; should suspicion once find a place in its pure mansion, you would no longer continue to be happy. Confidence in your husband, that cement of conjugal happiness, would, at least, be impaired, if not broken, and your future peace be forever alloyed. Cease then my most dear friend to dwell on useless and vain conjectures. Be content to know that your husband loves you, that he adores you, and the consciousness of your own purity will protect you from every sensation which is displeasing."

"Oh, Rhoda!" said the countess, affected almost to tears by arguments so strong and persuasive, "Oh, ever valued friend! how much do I feel myself indebted to your salutary counsel. Yes, I acknowledge I am unkind, and henceforth will remain for ever silent on such a subject, since, to doubt, is partly to wrong my husband. But, apropos, Rhoda, I have always forgot to shew you a portrait which is placed in a small neglected apartment of the castle, the beauty of which will enchant you. I intend to ask permission of my lord to suffer it to be brought down and placed in the picture gallery, for it exhibits a countenance I could never be weary of contemplating."

"What does it resemble?" said Miss Gurney.

"A woman," replied the countess, "and the most beautiful, Rhoda, you can possibly imagine. It is said that Mark Anthony lost the world for the beautiful Cleopatra, but had he gazed on this divinity, methinks he could not have done less. My sagacious aunt,

protested that it was the portrait of my lord's grandmother; let us hear your decision on a point so important."

The countess then called for Hannah, who had the custody of the keys, and desired her to open the doors through which they had to pass before they could arrive at the little chamber. But Hannah prepared to obey her lady's commands with much reluctance, declaring that the night was cold, and the apartments at that end of the castle damp; adding with much concern, and an unusual tremor in her voice,—

"I would not for the world have your ladyship venture there to night," and she carefully looked around her.

"And why not," cried the countess.

"'Tis so cold and gloomy," replied Hannah.

"Ridiculous," returned the countess, "have you no better reason than that to deter me from going."

"Yes—no my lady," replied Hannah in evident confusion.

Miss Gurney observing her, without knowing why, endeavoured to persuade the countess to return; alleging that, she herself felt extremely chilly.

The countess smiled, and, shaking her head, declared both she and Hannah were a couple of cowards. "I really begin to think," cried she, that you are apprehensive of encountering some evil spirit or hobgoblin in these apartments."

"I am not afraid of the dead," said Hannah most emphatically.

"Nor yet of the living I should hope," uttered lady Glenroy. "Why Hannah," surveying her, and perceiving she looked pale and alarmed, "what is the

matter with you? you never used to act so childish before. Come, if neither you nor Rhoda will accompany me, you will oblige me to go alone."

Hannah now involuntarily dropped upon her knees before the countess, while she almost screamed out—

"Alone madam! Oh! for the love of mercy do not think of going there alone." She then turned to Miss Gurney,—“Pray dear good Miss Gurney, do not suffer my lady to venture there alone.”

Miss Gurney now began to entertain some very serious apprehensions that, there was something more attached to these apartments than Hannah chose to disclose, and once more attempted to persuade the countess to relinquish visiting the apartment that night; but with a look of determined resolution she declared, she resolved to proceed to the spot which contained her favorite portrait, and commanded Hannah to take the candle and lead the way.

“Well then madam,” said Hannah, “since you are determined to go, pray take hold of my arm, and let Miss Gurney walk by the side of you.”

“You are really Hannah growing quite absurd,” said the countess, “for what purpose should I do all this: however, to please you, come Rhoda, let me take your arm.”

In this manner they proceeded to the little chamber which contained the portrait without meeting the smallest interruption; and the countess laughing the whole time at the shaking limbs and fear-struck countenance of poor old Hannah. They now approached the door where hung the beauteous resemblance, and the countess exclaimed in tones of extacy—

“There Rhoda, did you ever behold any thing



half so beautiful ? how pure, how innocent she looks : it would be next to an impossibility almost to suppose that lovely being, were she in existence, capable of deception."

Miss Gurney was just about to reply to this observation, when a sigh deeper, and if possible more piercing than that heard in the pine grove, arrested their attention, and transfixed like statues they continued to gaze on each other without being able to articulate a single word.

Miss Gurney, however, was the first who attempted to break the silence, as taking the hand of the now terrified countess, she perceived her to be near fainting ; yet strange to say, that though Hannah beheld the situation of her beloved mistress, and was visibly affected by it, yet she uttered not a word.

" For Heaven's sake let us instantly quit this place," said Miss Gurney. Hannah now assisted to lead the countess out ; and Miss Gurney, putting her arm round her waist, almost carried her through the apartment which they had before passed ; but they had no sooner placed her in a chair, than she burst into an agony of tears, exclaiming—

" Oh ! merciful Heaven, what can this mean ? and for what am I yet preserved ?"

" Why should you, my beloved friend," cried Miss Gurney, " suppose it is attached to yourself ? may it not equally belong to"—

" Lord Glenroy !" answered the countess ; and does it not, therefore, equally belong to me ? am I not his wife ? and for some unknown cause strangely connected with this dreadful mystery, am I not justified now Rhoda, in my suspicions ?"

Miss Gurney durst not venture to express her sentiments on a subject so strangely mysterious, and remained silent. The countess then turned to Hannah, and perceived that she was much embarrassed.

"You too my poor Hannah seem strangely agitated," uttered she, "I command you to tell me, as you value my repose, what you know appertaining to that dreadful apartment ; for that you are informed of some part of the mystery I am convinced from the conduct you have shewn to night."

Hannah replied not but with her tears.

"Have you ever witnessed any thing before like what we heard to night Hannah," repeated the countess.

"Yes madam, once before," cried Hannah, "and now I beseech you my dear lady, if your poor old faithful Hannah was ever dear to you, ask me no more questions concerning this matter ; if you regard my life, dear lady, be for ever silent on the subject ; for if you mention it to my lord, you are lost for ever, and I shall be a dead woman," cried Hannah still looking fearfully around her.

"My dearest friend," cried Miss Gurney, "I implore you to abide by what Hannah says ; you cannot doubt of her zeal towards you ; strong are her motives be assured for concealing what may have happened to come within her knowledge of this mysterious affair. Seek therefore to inquire no further ; your innocence will shield you from the storm, let the blast blow ever so keen:—trust to that, and time will elucidate all other things."

The countess bowed in silence ; she promised to obey Miss Gurney's injunctions, and turned her beautiful eyes in meek submission to heaven. But she

found her confidence in her husband dreadfully shaken, and the tranquillity which she had of late so perfectly enjoyed but the prelude to a tale of impenetrable mystery and of affliction yet to come.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.



It was a late hour when Sir William and the earl returned; and the countess and Miss Gurney, dreadfully agitated with the incident of the evening had retired to bed. In the morning lady Glenroy arose with a heavy heart; there was a degree of langour in her countenance and a paleness in her complexion which was now quite unusual, and it attracted the notice of the earl and Sir William the moment she appeared at breakfast. Taking her hand, and looking earnestly in her face, his lordship tenderly exclaimed—

“ Evadne, my soul’s darling, are you not well?”

And before the countess had sufficient time to answer this question, Miss Gurney, who was present, instantly replied—

“ Oh! my lord, ’tis nothing more than the effects of a fright which the countess and myself received while you were gone to Courtney Hall. I’ll tell you how it happened. We were taking our evening stroll, and being near the farm, nothing would serve my lady but she must go and look at the calves, which Jenkinson had intimated were the prettiest creatures in the

world. Well, my lord, away goes that naughty woman and your humble servant into the cow-house, when lo and behold the mother of the calves not taking our visit so kind as we could wish, threatened us with such violence, that had we not taken to our heels and scampered away as fast as we could, you may easily suppose how dreadful would have been the consequence of our imprudence. I declare I have been dreaming all night of being tossed by a furious mad bull."

"How could you, my dear creature," said the earl, "think of going there alone? and without calling some person to shew these little animals belonging to the house. Really, Evadne, I am half inclined to be angry with you, for being so venturous."

"And you, madam," cried Sir William to Miss Gurney, "deserve to have a rod in pickle for suffering the countess to act (begging her ladyship's pardon) so foolishly."

Miss Gurney acknowledged that she was ready to submit to any punishment they thought proper to inflict on her for so doing.

"Then I protest you shall give us both a kiss, Rhoda," said the earl.

"And I don't know whether I shall not be induced to take twenty," exclaimed Sir William. "Such an offence as the culprit has been guilty of, must be chastised with tenfold severity," and he imprinted an ardent kiss on the lips of Miss Gurney, that brought a very pretty vermilion into her cheeks.

The earl declared she should not escape without paying his forfeit also, therefore she received a salute from his lordship, though we cannot exactly say it was quite so ardent as Sir William's.

Spite of the depression of spirits which the countess laboured under, she could not help smiling at the ingenuity of her friend ; and happy to find that her story had gained so much credit with the earl, endeavoured to assume a cheerfulness which her heart was very far from experiencing in reality. The earl now informed her that they had all received the most pressing invitation to dine that day at Courtney Hall ; and he added, and you, Rhoda, are particularly requested to favour us with your company thither, at the earnest solicitation of lady Courtney, who I am happy to say is in a fair way of emerging from all her fashionable follies and recovering her senses.

" 'Tis a query to me now," cried Sir William, " whether she ever possessed any ; but faith, the situation of poor Sir George affects me greatly ; he is a good fellow, and I could willingly wish he were restored to his former tranquillity. We must try, my lord what we can do with this strange man, this, count Rosalvi, when he arrives ; for Jenkinson informs me he is a foreigner—an Italian of some distinction, and that his dingy complexion, like his disposition, is dark and gloomy, and his temper exceedingly morose, occasioned by some unhappy incidents in the early period of his life, the cause of which still remains a secret ; be that as it may, we will endeavour to soften his flinty heart.

" I am told that his property is immense," rejoined the earl. " Strange that he should be so solicitous to have the money paid immediately."

" But as we do not know his motives," cried Sir William, " we must suspend all further judgment on

his character, and wait the issue of his arrival at Courtney Hall.

"Count Rosalvie will be here to-day, will not he?" enquired lady Glenroy.

"Yes, love," answered the earl, "therefore, my dear Rhoda, prepare to put on all your charms! English beauty, like English hospitality, is sure to awaken in the breast of a foreigner the most lively impressions; and who knows but our little poetess may make a conquest? why Harman you don't seem pleased with the supposition; probably my last conclusion does not exactly coincide with your wishes?"

Sir William certainly did betray a little embarrassment, and he replied—

"Well, suppose me not to be pleased then. I can keep my thoughts to myself, cannot I?"

"By no means," returned the earl, hardly suppressing a laugh; "out with them for the benefit of society."

"Tormenting creature," said the countess, and smiled.

"By Jove, since you insist upon having them," said Sir William. "I was thinking I had much sooner that lady should make a conquest of me than all the foreigners in the created universe."

Miss Gurney blushed; and the earl exclaimed—

"Why, it is pretty evident she has done that already."

"I believe she has," muttered Sir William, and marched out of the room.

"Rhoda, I give you joy," cried the earl, "we shall shortly have the pleasure of paying our devoirs to lady Harman."

“ You are a most unmerciful creature, my lord,” returned Miss Gurney, “ and the next time you feel disposed to rally, I shall certainly contrive to steal out of your way.”

The ladies now retired to dress, which a few minutes entirely completed. The countess being attired, as she always was, with the neatest simplicity ; ever lovely, she required no aid of ornament to set her off. Miss Gurney, though she was amply supplied by her generous benefactress with every article of elegant apparel, had too much good sense to make an improper display of it ; and wore, on this day a white lute string gown with black ornaments. She contrasted her now happy lot with all those humiliating and mortifying sensations she had experienced on the first day of her introduction at Courtney Hall ; and seated in the same carriage with her benevolent benefactress, she breathed a fervent prayer to that Divine Power whose dispensations had been so liberally bestowed.

Sir George appeared at the gate with a countenance which beamed with the most animated gratitude, and conducting them to the drawing-room, they beheld the now penitent lady Courtney occupied by the most delightful employment, she was nursing her infant son, and the little Sophia was playing at her feet ; she rose at their entrance, but could hardly restrain her tears as she pronounced—

“ Welcome, a thousand times welcome, my dearest friends. Miss Gurney (and Lady Courtney condescendingly offered her hand) accept my sincerest thanks for kindly consenting to come hither. There was a time when I was led to overlook your merits

and be assured I shall ever remember that day with a deep sense of shame and regret."

"Your ladyship does me injustice," said Miss Gurney, most cordially returning her ladyship's salute, if you suppose at this moment it is not quite forgotten."

Sir William was in rapture; he sung and capered about the room, to the no small entertainment of the little laughing Sophia, with whom he played. He then kissed the lovely infant, and paid many compliments to lady Courtney, declaring he could now discover more charms in her than he thought she was ever possessed of.

"By Jove madam," cried Sir William, "when I used to see you in the midst of your finery along with your contemporaries in fashionable folly. I could not endure the sight of you; but here, here is something more agreeable to my eye-sight: this is a prospect which enchants me. I love to see a mother tending and nursing her children; and that little chubby rogue there in your arms shall, if he lives, have a third of all that I possess.

The playful innocent at this moment held out his little arms to Sir William as if he had known of his kind intentions towards him, and he received him with a smile, while tears of contrition stole down the face of the too conscious mother. The melancholy state of mind to which she saw her husband reduced by her own imprudence had penetrated to the heart of Sophia, and was perhaps the first step towards her reformation; he was the father of her lovely children; and though she had so strangely abused his goodness, yet she tenderly loved him; and when Sir George had revealed



to her the whole derangement of his affairs and the ruin with which every hour threatened them, she was shocked, and bursting into tears, acknowledged her faults, imploring him to forgive them, and promised the sincerest amendment. It was easy to imagine that a husband like Sir George could not long cherish resentment against a woman on whom he doated, and he communicated to her the reception he had met with at Glenroy Castle when he apprised the earl and the countess with the situation of his affairs.—“ And our dear children my love,” cried he, “ our dear children are likewise presented with a gift of two thousand pounds.”

“ Oh, heavens ! from whom ?” cried the delighted Sophia.

“ The countess,” replied Sir George, “ the divine lady Glenroy.”

“ From Evadne ! can it be possible !” said lady Courtney. “ Oh ! how much have I wronged her goodness in supposing she would not have befriended me.”

“ Because you felt conscious how little you deserved it : was it not that my love ?” returned Sir George.”

“ I grant it,” said lady Courtney, “ I acknowledge that, when under my father’s roof, I was always base enough to treat her with unkindness, with ingratitude : but heaven has rewarded her, and, I hope sufficiently chastised me.”

The sight of lord Glenroy’s carriage now put an end to their interesting conversation, when lady Courtney was discovered in the situation already described.

She found an opportunity to converse with the countess apart for a few moments, and expressed her grati-

tude in the liveliest manner for the noble act of generosity she had conferred in favour of her children.

"Mention it not Sophia said the countess, I require no thanks. I am blessed with the power of being serviceable to my friends; you, Sophia, are a near relative, and it would be both a sin and a shame if inclination was wanting where ability is so great."

They then rambled in the park before dinner, Miss Gurney leading in her hand the little Sophia, whose innocent prattle and affectionate caresses delighted her. They continued to walk, when the child suddenly stopped, and running to lady Courtney, exclaimed—

"Oh! dear mamma, look there; there is such a beautiful coach at our gate, and my papa is speaking to a gentleman who is getting out of it; do let us go to them, mamma."

"Count Rosalvie is then, I dare say, arrived," said lady Courtney. "Oh! Evadne, how my heart sinks at his name. He is such a character that I confess I cherish but little hope of his lenity towards us."

"Hope better," replied the countess; "and see here is Sir George coming towards us."

Sir George now approached.

"He is come," cried he. "Count Rosalvie is arrived, and is already in the drawing-room. Summons up your courage, my love, and meet him with a smile."

Sir George then led the way, the ladies following; and opening the drawing-room door, presented to their view the so much dreaded count Rosalvie. He was at that moment engaged in conversation with the earl and Sir William, and did not perceive their entrance,

till Sir George, taking his wife in one hand and the countess in the other, respectfully introduced them, and afterwards Miss Gurney.

Count Rosalvie rose and bowed very courteously, but his eyes a second time glancing towards lady Glenroy, he started and turned pale. He looked at her again—he became more agitated—he attempted to speak and to apologize for the rudeness he had been guilty of, but his voice faltered, and he could scarcely stammer out—

“Madam, I trust you will pardon the liberty I have availed myself of, but the almost perfect resemblance your features bear to a dear lamented object, whom time can never efface from my recollection, has, I confess, suddenly and wholly overpowered me.”

He then leaned back on his chair, and seemed unable to suppress emotions which became every moment more painful. The attentions of the whole party were now directed towards him, and the earl, taking the hand of the countess, entreated her to withdraw.

“Retire, my love,” cried he, “for a few moments; I think you had better till count Rosalvie is more composed.”

“Oh! let me indeed go,” cried the countess, in her accustomed gentle and melodious voice. “I cannot bear to wound sensibility so great.”

Count Rosalvie gasped for breath—he started from his chair—he suddenly opposed the earl in taking the countess from the room, and surveying her again, with the deepest anguish imprinted on every feature, exclaimed—

“Speak again! Oh! let my ear but catch those

tones once again—they penetrate my inmost soul—they awaken me to a long lost sense of happiness—to the thrilling, the extatic hope of bliss. Speak then, for my existence depends upon your reply. Was not your mother's name Laura? and before your marriage was not yours **Le Burney**."

"The same," pronounced the countess.

"Then you are mine," exclaimed count **Rosalvie**. "I am the long lost **Le Burney**, and father to that **Laura's** child. Oh! Providence, thy arm was never stretched out in vain; it snatched me from the waves—it upheld me in captivity—and now it brings me to the presence of my child. Oh! angelic resemblance of thy sainted mother, my heart springs to meet thee. **Le Burney** acknowledges his daughter!"

"Art thou indeed my father?" said the countess. "Oh! blessed, blessed title!" and she threw herself into the extended arms which were open to receive her.

Smiles, tears, and kisses, were mingled in the embrace. A little composed, count **Rosalvie** took from his breast a miniature picture, and presenting it to the earl—

"Here, here, my friends, cried he, for such from this hour I must ever consider you; behold the features of her mother. Can there exist a more perfect resemblance? was it possible for the instinct of a father's heart to be mistaken in his child? Oh! what were my sensations when my eyes first encountered her extatic glance? but when I heard her voice, the living image of my **Laura** stood before me. Oh! my friends, you witnessed at that moment my strong emotions; you now behold my transports; they are indeed too great for

utterance ;” and again he pressed his daughter to his heart.

The features of the countess and those represented in the lovely portrait of the unfortunate Laura were the same, and the earl while he gazed on it, remembered all the particulars of her melancholy story, related in the words of the colonel while at Bloomfield House.

The embarrassments of Sir George, the mortgage, the estate, all were forgotten in the present moment of felicity ; and one and all shared in the transports of the delighted father and his recovered daughter. For a considerable part of that day he would not suffer the countess to quit his side even for a moment ; and fixt in earnest contemplation on the lovely lineaments of her face would now and then suddenly exclaim—

“ It is then no dream, it is reality ; and Le Burney is indeed blessed with the child of his Laura. Oh ! my full heart, how richly art thou paid for whole lengthened years of anguish and despair !”

He promised the countess early to acquaint her with a narrative of past events : and, as the earl had informed him he was partly in possession of his history from the beginning of his attachment to Mrs. Le Burney to the period of her death, he delayed for a few days being communicative on a subject which would revive the most painful recollections in his own breast ; while it would excite in the gentle bosom of his daughter a degree of agitation for which her spirits at the present moment were far from being able to encounter. He commissioned the earl to inform Sir George Courtney that, he had not come there to enforce the payment of the debt he owed him. The motive which brought

him there was, in the first instance, curiosity to see a country he had heard so much extolled ; and, in the second, he hoped it was the pure impulse of humanity ; that his misfortunes had soured his temper, but trusted they had by no means hardened his disposition to the commission of uncharitable actions ; that from the happy moment wherein he had discovered and acknowledged his daughter he should not only consider his debt as cancelled, but supply him with any further sums he might require to retrieve his embarrassed circumstances, “ for,” continued count Rosalvie, “ I am now the wealthiest of the wealthy ; and, having recovered my heart’s dearest treasure in the possession of my child, am also the happiest of the happy. Long since have I learned to estimate the true value of riches by sharing them with the worthy ; and the insufficiency of all knowledge which does not lead to the practice of christianity.”

Lady Glenroy, though she had not forgotten the mysterious sighs, yet, in the society of her new-found father, ceased to dwell so constantly on the alarming apprehensions which they had excited. She had now the protecting arm of a parent to shield her from any calamity which might in future threaten her ; and, as she hung delighted on every kind sentence which fell from his lips, his endearing caresses administered a balm which proved a source of inexhaustible happiness ; and from the fresh proofs of affection, which, indeed, he daily evinced towards her, the daughter of Le Burney might justly be estimated the most enviable of human beings.

A few days after count Rosalvie became an inmate of the earl’s mansion he presented him with a fortune

of sixty thousand pounds as the portion of his Evadne, which lord Glenroy strenuously opposed accepting; but the count would take no refusal; declaring that the remainder of his property would devolve to his darling child at his demise. He appeared highly pleased with the excentric humour of Sir William Harman; and Miss Gurney, as she evidently seemed a favorite with the countess, was honored with many marks of his attention: he moreover thought Rhoda a highly-accomplished and sensible woman.

One evening that the count had appeared unusually thoughtful, he intreated his friends to make a circle round the fireside, when he would impart to them his promised narrative from the time that he had embarked for Italy to the day on which he had so providentially discovered his daughter.

“Imagine my friends,” cried he, “the grief which took possession of my bosom on quitting the beloved of my soul to embark on a watery element; for I had been but three weeks a husband, and every fibre of my heart was so closely wound round the object of my love that, to part with her, was a pang of all others insupportable. You who have seen but the outward form of my departed angel, may judge in some degree of the purity that reigned within; in all that was resistless, gentle, and engaging, was Laura Bloomfield; and from the first moment that I beheld her, my heart became her willing slave. Heaven knows with what reluctance I sought her clandestinely to become my wife; yet had she consented to have accompanied me to Italy, I would have braved a frowning father, a stern mother, and with pride have acknowledged the object of my heart’s dearest choice. No inducement,

however, could prevail with her to quit the shores of her native land ; and I bade adieu to Laura with a bosom torn with contending sensations of anguish and despair. Never shall I forget her last look, her last words, as she fondly uttered while clasped to my throbbing heart—

“ ‘Sigismund, my existence will depend upon your’s ; when you arrive in Italy, let your letters prove the herald of your safety.’ ”

“ Alas ! my poor Laura ! never was she destined again to behold her lost, her distracted husband ! I was torn from her arms, and driven on the merciless ocean in the momentous expectation of perishing by shipwreck.”—

“ And to that hour,” said the earl, “ I am acquainted with your history. A letter from the captain who survived the unfortunate crew with a boy related to Mrs. Hamilton the melancholy intelligence that you likewise had perished ; and that I fear occasioned the premature death of your lamented wife.”

“ I know it,” cried the count, visibly affected, “ I am acquainted with it all since my return to England. After a fruitless search to discover her abode, I suddenly encountered Mrs. Hamilton one morning in a solitary ramble ; the worthy woman not being able to credit the evidence of her senses fainted at the sight of me ; and it was many hours before I could persuade her to believe that I was the very identical Sigismund Le Burney whom she had the strongest reason to suppose had long since perished in the bosom of the ocean. Besides which, affliction, slavery (for I had been a captive in Algiers), and sickness had so changed my former person that, she might easily have conclud-



ed I was an impostor, had not the tones of my voice, as she afterwards assured me, reminded her that it could be only me.

“ But my wife, cried I.”

“ In giving birth to a daughter,” said Mrs. Hamilton, “ and in the supposition that you no longer existed, expired a few hours after her delivery, bequeathing her child to the care of her only brother, colonel Bloomfield.”

“ Where is he now ?” cried I ; “ and what has he done with my child ?”

Mrs. Hamilton, bursting into tears, declared it was many years since he had departed from that country, no one knew whither ; that he had married the daughter of an opulent farmer, who was by no means his equal in mind or manners, and that she had wandered a whole year in the hope of being able to find out his place of residence, but in vain ; she believed the colonel to be no longer living, or gone to reside in some distant country.

“ In either case then,” cried I, “ the child of my Laura is lost to me. Was it for this that I escaped shipwreck ; that I endured for seven long long years slavery. My despair knew no bounds ; I reproached Mrs. Hamilton with unkindness ; with neglect to Laura, by deserting her infant.

“ The poor woman wept bitterly—she flung herself at my feet ; she implored my pity and forgiveness, and added—

“ ‘ You forget, Sir, it was the dying request of Mrs. Le Burney, that her brother should adopt her child, and the little Evadne was delivered to his care from the hour of her birth. The colonel is a worthy man,

and has I doubt not most faithfully discharged his trust.'

" 'That remains to be proved,' answered I, and alas! what may now be the destiny of my beloved child! or supposing that her uncle has cherished her with regard, who can tell if the woman he has married may be equally kind! who madam can supply to my Laura's child the unutterable fondness of a doating father.' "

Tears, now unrestrained, fell fast from the countess at the recollection of some past events which no change of time or situation had yet been able to obliterate from her memory; which count Rosalvie instantly remarking intreated her to be composed.

" Why is my sweet Evadne so much affected," cried he, " are not the days of our misfortune now past? You cannot weep at affliction yet to come, therefore my love be comforted."

Lady Glenroy bowed over her father's hand which she pressed to her lips; but as she did so, it was bedewed with a shower of her gentle tears.

" Our Evadne sir is the child of sensibility," said the earl, gently pressing her hand, " but I beseech you count Rosalvie," continued he, " to inform us, when the vessel struck on a rock, what miracle preserved you from experiencing the fate of your unfortunate companions."

The countess and Miss Gurney shuddered, and the count proceeded with his narrative.

" Dreadful was the conflict between life and death," uttered he, " for, although an expert swimmer, I was on the point of sinking exhausted by fatigue into a bottomless abyss, when I was instantaneously for-

by a tremendous billow on the rocks. I was just conscious that I still breathed but no more; my senses forsaking me in that moment of miraculous preservation; and I was afterwards informed that I continued insensible for a considerable time after the Algerines bore me to their vessel: who it seems cherished my existence in order that I might become their captive. To their timely discovering me on the rocks was I however indebted for further preservation, as I lay without sense or motion, they dressed my wounds (for I was dreadfully bruised); and forcing a cordial down my throat, conveyed me on board. There was no doubt much care bestowed on my recovery, for I continued for three weeks so much enfeebled from the bruises I had received as scarcely to be able to walk. Arrived in Algiers they delivered me to the merchant with whom they were negotiating for slaves. This man was called Zanguebar, and was, without exception, the most unfeeling of his kind. I imparted to him my name and circumstances, and referred him to my father count Carlini Rosalvie of Italy; but he refused to take any ransom which could be offered for my emancipation; and though he condescended to treat me with less severity than the generality of his slaves, yet, torn from every cherished hope of fond affection, my mind became a prey to the deepest anguish and despondence. I could obtain no communication with my family; and the thoughts of what they must endure on my account, kept my mind continually on the rack; added to which, my feelings for my poor deserted Laura, whom I now considered for ever lost to me, mounted to such excess of agony that, I was often in danger of a total deprivation of my senses.

“The monster Zanguebar beheld the situation to which I was reduced without one atom of commiseration; but, on the contrary, I believe his savage disposition was gratified in the reflection that, there was a prospect of my remaining in perpetual banishment. I often endeavoured to excite some emotion of pity in his flinty heart, some tender sentiment of compassion, by attempting to describe in language which would have melted the heart of a stoic the imagined situation of my distracted wife; but it was to no purpose that I uttered my complaints, the impenetrable Zanguebar was deaf to all my intreaties, unmoved by all my sufferings; and it was not till a burning fever had attacked me, that I was permitted to abstain from one moment’s employ in the plantations of this persevering tyrant. My disorder raged with violence, and baffled the skill of their most eminent physicians, who, for a length of time pronounced me to be incurable. I was totally regardless of life; existence had become a burthen to me; and I looked upon death as a consoling friend who was shortly to terminate my miseries.”

“Oh, my father!” exclaimed the countess, “my poor suffering father, how much hast thou endured! while thy child, absent and exiled from thy presence, knew not the inestimable blessing of a parent’s love.”

Count Rosalvie cast a look of unutterable fondness on his lovely daughter and continued.—

“Suffering, my child, is the lot of humanity; and trust me, they who pass through life without it are not more happy on that account; for having no real evils to complain of, the restless imagination then estimates every trivial disappointment as a misfortune, and can bear it with less fortitude than those who have passed

the ordeal of all human trials. Did we not feel sorrow, we should be rendered callous to the sufferings of others. I was indeed at this period of my affliction reduced to that state of inanity that, I ceased to repine at a fate for which there appeared no remedy. I no longer complained; and one morning, when my disorder had considerably abated and I was able to walk about my chamber, I was surprised by the sudden appearance of Celestina, Zanguebar's daughter, whom I had never beheld but once during my captivity. She was beautiful as the fabled Houries; and gentle as the dews which the first breath of morn sheds on opening flowers."

" 'You are free,' cried she, ' Celestina gives you liberty! Celestina, who has wept for your sufferings when the means of compassion were denied to her, now obtains the mandate for your emancipation. You are no longer the slave of an inexorable tyrant; Zanguebar is no more: last night he paid the forfeit of his persecution, cruelty, and hatred. Rise, poor captive,' for I had fallen at her feet, ' and breathe your gratitude to heaven where alone it is due.'

" As she departed, this angel of pity dropt a purse, the contents of which were more than sufficient to give me a passport to my native land. Conceive my transports dearest friends: ah! you cannot! A wretched being after seven long years of hard captivity restored at once to the blessings of health and liberty—Oh! there is not a speck contained on the surface of the universal earth on which he does not gaze with rapture—from which he does not inspire some new delight! The birds, the flowers, the fields, the air to him seem opening paradise; and there is not a breath-

ing object in creation which he is not disposed to love! My bosom bounded with the most transporting hopes. My heart, disencumbered of its long cherished griefs, anticipated the most extatic meeting with my friends; and when I slumbered in my now joyful dreams I constantly murmured—

“ ‘ Laura, darling of my heart, we meet again.’ ”

“ I quitted Algiers, and arrived in Italy just time enough to close the eyes of my expiring mother. My father, count Carlini Rosalvie, whose title and estates I succeeded to, had long since been numbered with the dead : and my mother, despairing of ever beholding me again, was in the last stage of a consumption. She retained no traces of her former self; and my return to my paternal home rather hastened her dissolution than was the means of prolonging her existence : she expired in my arms on the fifth day after my arrival at the Chateau of Rosalvie ; leaving me the sole heir of a property which was immense, and which I then fondly hoped I should at last have the consolation of sharing with Laura. Relinquishing my family name of Le Burney for the title which I inherited from my father I left Italy with a heart braced to extacy, and once more beheld the shores of Albion.

“ Here my friends you know the sum of all my woes; the melancholy sequel of all my afflictions, in comparison with which all others seemed light. I found my wife dead—my child lost. Again I became the sport of cruel destiny; yet had heaven preserved one precious drop to throw into the cup of my affliction; it has sweetened the bitter draught : it has done more ; it has turned the stream of sorrow into the waters of Lethe. I have drank of it; and misfortune

are forgotten. Oblivion casts a veil over all past sufferings;—peace is returned;—and happiness springs again in the embraces of my recovered child—in Le Burney's acknowledged daughter."

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

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"Was ever daughter so happy?" exclaimed the countess of Glenroy. "Was ever child more blessed?" and, smiling through her tears, she presented each a hand, to her father and her husband, which they affectionately kissed; then turning to Miss Gurney, who had discovered great sensibility at the relation of count Rosalvie's narrative, "and you, my beloved Rhoda," said she, "who are a witness, shall also be a sharer in my happiness. Friend of my heart, amiable instructress, think you I can ever be insensible to your merits? No, Rhoda, we will never part."

"Unless a certain event takes place," observed lord Glenroy, perceiving that Miss Gurney was greatly affected; and willing to give the conversation a more lively turn, he added—"then surely, Evadue, you will not have the conscience to separate man and wife."

This introduced some pleasant raillery, and even count Rosalvie was induced to bear a part. He declared, should that be the case, he hoped Miss Gurney would do him the honour to select him as father on that important day.

Sir William discovered no small symptoms of satisfaction on perceiving that the subject was by no means disagreeable to his dear little poetess, to whom he had more than once contrived to impart a declaration of his regard. We cannot tell when or where, Sir William being very sly in the business; and she, it seems, had given him no cause for despair, but had actually consented to become lady Harman at an early period.

Count Rosalvie one morning stole a march upon the good folks at the castle, and while they yet reposed in the arms of Morpheus, made the best of his way to Courtney Hall, leaving word with Hannah that he should not return to breakfast; when arrived there, Sir George and Sophia, by every mark of the most respectful attention, endeavoured to convince him how highly they estimated his good opinion and friendship, and how much they were indebted to him for his friendly visit; but the benevolent heart of count Rosalvie had something more in contemplation than merely taking a dish of tea with them. He desired that the little girl whom he saw on the first day of his arrival there might be brought to him, as he had recollected an incident which had occurred respecting this child, which, however trifling, had made some impression on him. Count Rosalvie was a man of a peculiar turn of thinking, therefore it is not at all extraordinary that he should entertain strange fancies, and wished to have them indulged. He remembered to have asked the little Sophia, as she twisted her little fingers in the ornaments which were suspended from his watch chain, if she loved him? The child at first hesitated to make a reply, but on his



repeating the question "do you love me?" she answered—

"Yes, Sir; but if you will love my papa and mama, I shall love you a great deal better."

"And suppose that I do not chuse to care any thing at all about your papa and mama?" said count Rosalvie.

The little girl instantly dropped the ornaments with which she had been amusing herself, and struggling to escape from the arms of count Rosalvie, exclaimed, "I won't love you, indeed I won't; you are a naughty man, and I won't love any body who is unkind to my papa and mama;" then she burst into tears, no persuasion inducing her to return to him for the remainder of the day.

This little anecdote he related to her father and mother while at breakfast, and declared that he was come that morning with the intention of making reparation to the little offended Sophia. She was now brought into the room, and count Rosalvie taking her in his arms, fully reconciled himself to her, by declaring that he was extremely fond of her dear mama.

She was one of the loveliest creatures in the world; a profusion of flaxen hair curled in natural ringlets over her forehead, and her eyes, of the brightest blue, sparkled with innocent delight, while she lavished the most affectionate caresses on the count; seated on his knee, and looking earnestly in his face, she pronounced "you are a pretty man now."

Count Rosalvie soon afterwards arose to depart, declaring he expected to receive severe chastisement on his return to the castle for walking out alone. He

then requested lady Courtney would write to her father, colonel Bloomfield, and invite him down, in order that he might have the pleasure of conversing with the brother of his beloved wife, and of thanking him for the care he had taken of his dear child.

At these words the cheeks of lady Courtney were suffused with the deepest scarlet ; and she had by no means recovered her confusion, when count Rosalvie, taking from his pocket-book a bank bill to the amount of five hundred pounds, begged it might be presented as a gift to her little favourite.

“ If there is a pleasure in returning good deeds for evil ones (and who shall deny that there is not), count Rosalvie was certainly in this instance quite unconscious of it ; but it was beyond any doubt that it was recorded in that sacred register where neither good or evil deeds can find concealment, and where it met with its due reward. Without staying to receive her thanks, he proceeded to the castle, and was gently reprimanded by his lovely daughter for being so unkind as to deprive her of the pleasure of accompanying him. After a few minutes silence, count Rosalvie suddenly enquired of the earl—

“ Pray, my lord,” cried he, “ favour me with a description of this wife of the good colonel’s, this Mrs. Bloomfield, for I know not how it is, I have taken it into my head that she is a very unpleasant woman.”

“ Then, by Jove,” count Rosalvie, cried Sir William, “ give me leave to tell you you have only taken in your head a just conclusion ; but as you have probably never visited a place called Billingsgate, where fish is to be sold in large quantities, you can form no

estimate of the true accomplishments of this lady, which consist chiefly of the prowess of the tongue.

"What she is a virago then?" cried count Rosalvie.

"The greatest termagant in existence," replied Sir William, "and rules the roast, as the saying is, or in other words, the poor colonel is as arrant a hen-pecked husband as may be found in the three kingdoms; then she is so cursedly conceited, so shockingly illiterate, and so abominably vulgar, that upon my soul (you'll excuse me my dear countess), I have often blushed when I have beheld her in the same society with you."

"She must be a pleasant companion," observed count Rosalvie, "yet her daughter, methinks lady Courtney, appears an amiable woman."

"Reformed," cried Sir William. "By Jove, if I don't think she was once as bad as her mother; but she is the wife of poor Sir George, and I actually begin to think that her penitence is sincere."

"I am convinced of it, my dear Sir," said the countess.

"Well, madam, said Sir William, "perhaps it may be so; but though you are an angel yourself, and are charitable enough to suppose that every body else is like you, yet you must not be surprised to find others who will maintain a contrary opinion. I have had my doubts too. I confess that you, madam, were never treated according to your deserts in the colonel's family. I may be wrong; I am an odd fellow, and sometimes have odd thoughts, but you have rewarded good for evil, and are doubly blessed."

Sir William then informed count Rosalvie of the two thousand pounds which lady Glenroy had given

to the children of lady Courtney ; at which generous action of his darling child tears started into the eyes of count Rosalvie ; he then turned to the earl, who had remained unusually silent on the subject of the colonel and Mrs. Bloomfield, but he joined in praising his Evadne with an eloquence of which he could at all times be master, and in which he was at least sincere.

“ I perceive then, my lord,” cried count Rosalvie, “ that my dearest child is too noble-minded to be explicit on the conduct of this uncle and aunt ; and whether she has experienced kindness or the reverse you are equally dumb on the occasion ; we will therefore dismiss all further discussion upon a subject so unpleasing to all parties, and particularly so to the feelings of a father.”

Lord Glenroy, for the first time in the presence of count Rosalvie, discovered an agitation, which, though he endeavoured to conceal from his observing eye, was but too strongly impressed on every feature. He sighed deeply ; his cheerfulness seemed for an instant totally to have forsaken him, and pleading a violent head-ache, he partook not of any part of the supper, which was prepared in the grand saloon.

Tears trembled in the eyes of the lovely countess, and “ mysterious man” escaped her lips as she affectionately kissed the cheek of her father ; fortunately it met not his hearing, yet count Rosalvie retired on this evening to his apartment with a less degree of serenity than he had yet felt within the walls of Glenroy Castle. There was something wanting in the character of the earl which he could not at present define, and that want appeared to be ingenuousness ; he was not sufficiently candid he thought in his

sentiments respecting the colonel's family, which, were it out of delicacy to his child, or the circumstance of the colonel's being the brother of his Laura, he could then pardon ; and, laying his head on his pillow, he breathed a fervent prayer to Heaven for the repose of the countess, piously ejaculating, " Heaven preserve my innocent child ! and may the purity of her gentle heart be her best shield to guard her from experiencing deceit, ingratitude, or temptation."

Neither of the parties arose on the succeeding morning with their usual spirits. Count Rosalvie was impatient to converse in private with his daughter ; he was anxious to learn if her marriage with the earl had been an attachment of the heart, or an union founded by the ambitious views or mercenary principles of her uncle, and strongly did he forbode the latter ; the innocent and mild character of Evadne forming a striking contrast with the haughty disposition of her husband. In short there was something repelling in lord Glenroy, which count Rosalvie could by no means reconcile to the idea of his daughter having selected him as the object of her choice ; yet again he reflected were it otherwise what could it now avail ? was she not his wife ? why then should he probe into the secrets of her gentle heart ? why draw forth a confession, that being now married to the earl, would be the height of impropriety for her to disclose even to a father ? He determined therefore not to urge her on a subject which would be so painful to her feelings ; yet he resolved to penetrate, if possible, more minutely than he had hitherto done, into the true principles and real character of lord Glenroy, which he apprehended were only at times but fictitious

ones. A degree of reserve now appeared very evident, on the part of his lordship, in his conversations with count Rosalvie ; they now seldom met but at dinner, Sir William being his constant companion in his morning walks and evening rides, which the countess remarking experienced a depression on her spirits which nothing could now have the power of charming away.

“ Oh, Rhoda ! ” cried she, one day to Miss Gurney, “ would we could learn what is passing in the heart of that mysterious man ; for sure there must be something of extraordinary import. Do you not observe that of late he has avoided my dear father ? why did I ever consent to become his wife ? ”

“ Again,” my dearest friend,” replied Miss Gurney, deeply affected at the agitation which the countess betrayed, “ again I must remind you of the danger of your entertaining ideas which can never fail to render you unhappy. If not for yourself, for count Rosalvie’s sake, I now implore you to silence on such a subject ; should you excite one painful emotion in the breast of that much valued parent, in the supposition of your being unhappy, think then what would be your compunction.”

“ I should never forgive myself,” returned the countess ; but, oh ! dearest Rhoda ! I do indeed feel that my peace of mind is gone for ever. Can splendour, can the wealth of worlds purchase that, oh never ! ”

“ Hush, here is your father,” cried Miss Gurney. The countess stooped to gather a sprig of myrtle to hide her face, which was wet with her tears, from the piercing glance of count Rosalvie.

“ Pray which of you two ladies am I to compliment,”

said he, "for the sweet strains of melody I have just heard?—Indeed my charming syrens I shall not suffer you to carry your music in the open air. Another day you must be content to confine your fascinating spells within doors, or Orpheus like you will enchant every plant and shrub about the castle."

"My dearest father," said the countess, looking much surprised, "I know not to what you allude! What music have you heard which has so much delighted you?"

"Strains of music just this moment in the pine grove," said count Rosalvie, "and I concluded from the sound they proceeded from you or Miss Gurney."

"From neither, I give you my word," replied lady Glenroy, turning excessively pale, "in the pine grove said you my father?"

"Yes my love; but why then alarmed? is it so extraordinary that I should have heard the strains of music?"

The countess, quite off her guard, clasped her hands together, while she most emphatically pronounced—

"Oh! yes, yes, very extraordinary! very alarming! very mysterious!—in the pine grove?"

It was in vain that Miss Gurney drew her gently from the count Rosalvie, exhorting her to silence; but she was too seriously impressed with forebodings to attend to the conversation even of her so highly valued friend; and her father, gazing on her with astonishment and concern, entreated that she would explain the cause of her apprehensions.

"I cannot, indeed I cannot my father;" said she, sinking into his arms; and after a pause recollecting herself, "but do you know that, I am often thus: I am

grown such a timid creature that, the merest trifle affects me."

"And was my child always thus?" said count Rosalvie, with a deep sigh.

"Not always," replied the countess, and her father perceived that her hand trembled in his.

"I am satisfied," said the count, "and for the present let us not dwell upon the incident which has excited such extraordinary emotion: I shall forget it for the moment; but mark me, my Evadne, a time may come when I shall seek to inquire into its cause."

They then rejoined the earl and Sir William Harman; but, by the little share he took in conversation, it was very perceptible that, count Rosalvie was occupied by some very serious reflections. The earl shrunk abashed from his penetrating gaze; and holding out a letter in his hand, requested that count Rosalvie would peruse it, and favor him with his advice upon its contents. This letter was from a Mr. Bradshaw, attorney at law, acquainting the earl with the decease of a distant relation, who had resided in Monmouthshire, and to whose property his lordship had become the next heir. Count Rosalvie having returned the letter exclaimed—

Were I in your case my lord I should certainly obey its mandate. There is nothing like being present on such occasions; and at this period of your life"——

Count Rosalvie paused and fixed his eyes earnestly on the changing countenance of lord Glenroy.—

"There is no necessity of reminding you that, in this world there exists such things as fraud, duplicity, and treachery."



Paler than ashes was the countenance of the earl ; he arose from his chair and paced the room with evident uneasiness ; but gazing on Evadne with unutterable fondness he approached her, and taking her hand, exclaimed in the presence of the astonished party—

“ Evadne, dear bought treasure, how shall I support a separation from thee ! ”

Wholly overcome by the tenderness of the moment, alarmed at his altered looks, and unable to conquer apprehensions which became every hour more painful, the countess burst into tears, while with a faltering voice she exclaimed—

“ My lord, my dear lord, why this agitation ? Oh ! you cannot suppose how much I endure from seeing you thus ! ”

Count Rosalvie now felt seriously alarmed for the happiness of his beloved child ; he was now convinced that lord Glenroy was labouring under some hidden anguish of mind ; but of what nature he either could not, or felt it improper to disclose ; and he walked to the casement to conceal emotions he found it difficult to suppress.

Tenderly embracing the countess, a forced smile appeared in the countenance of the earl, but he attempted no explanation of the agitation which he had discovered, but slightly observed—

“ Why my dearest love, this journey into Monmouthshire does indeed perplex me ; it is so immensely long that I cannot ask you to accompany me thither ; yet know not how to relinquish your society even for a day.”

“ Oh ! if that is all,” cried the countess, “ and it is your wish that I should go, believe me, I shall never

consider any thing a trouble which is in any degree conducive to your happiness."

"You are all goodness," exclaimed the earl, in tones of rapture, "that gentle bosom is the seat of excellence unrivalled. But my love I ought not to impose upon your kind, your willing, compliance. Come your father shall decide for us. Speak count Rosalvie favor us with your sentiments on this subject."

Count Rosalvie now feeling some commiseration for the earl's mental sufferings, would not willingly add to them at the present juncture; and believing that he strongly and tenderly regarded his beloved child he replied—

"Indeed my dear lord this is a point of great delicacy; but as I am not in the habit of disguising what I think, I will frankly own to you that, I do not see the great necessity of exposing our Evadne to such unnecessary fatigue, as I conclude you will not be absent longer than a month"—

"Or six weeks at the most," said the earl. "To your care then count Rosalvie I confide my heart's treasure; but to no other mortal in existence would I entrust so dear a charge. To-morrow I shall set forward on my journey; and though enriched with fortune by this event, still I must lament that I cannot enjoy your society for at least a month to come."

"I beg you will not apologize to me my lord," cried count Rosalvie, "for that father who cannot find pleasure in the society of his only child merits no other blessing under heaven. And there is my facetious friend Sir William will enliven our little party in your absence."

"Oh! we shall certainly find amusement, if it is

only to sit and quiz each other," cried Sir William, "therefore my lord express no further uneasiness, we shall all be vastly happy I assure you."

"How can I doubt it my good friend," observed the earl, when Miss Gurney is so near you."

"Nonsense," cried Sir William, I did not mean that: no my lord, I meant that"——

"Your meaning is very plain," replied the earl laughing, in which the countess and count Rosalvie were so provoking as to join; and Sir William observing the deeply blushing cheeks of Miss Gurney——

"Well well good folks you may take my meaning which way you please," cried he, "but I have no doubt when I say that we shall all find a way to render ourselves pleasant and agreeable to each other. There is your sweet countess will sometimes condescend to tune her harp and warble forth a scotch ditty; count Rosalvie, he will talk to us; Rhoda will read to us; and your humble servant, he will"——

"Make love," rejoined the earl.

"Possibly I may," cried Sir William; "cannot say that I have any particular objection. And now my lord I hope our mutual employments are all laid out to your entire satisfaction."

"Perfectly so my worthy sir," was the earl's reply."

The ensuing morning at eleven o'clock, his lordship having issued all necessary commands to the servants, his steward Jenkinson, and other persons employed on his establishment, quitted Glenroy Castle, taking in his travelling carriage Mr. Smart only, with whose services he could at no time entirely dispense; for whom a very able substitute was selected in the person of Duncan Campbell, who was a much greater favorite

with the lovely countess than the conceited and self-important Mr. Smart.

“In his lordship’s adieu to count Rosalvie he was rather remarkable, observing—

“When we meet again sir I trust it will be with an increase of happiness as well as fortune.”

“I trust it will,” echoed the count, but of that he secretly entertained many doubts.

The countess, as she returned the earl’s embrace, felt a strange shuddering she knew not why; and with difficulty her trembling lips pronounced,—“Farewell my lord.”

She was too happy however in the society of her new found father long to indulge in gloomy reflections; and that day they took an airing to Courtney Hall, and returned with the little Sophia, of whom count Rosalvie was extremely fond; declaring that, should a prospect continue of his daughter having no family, he could wish she should adopt this sweet little creature, to whom he would then leave a part of his property.—

“But I am not so hasty,” cried the count, glancing an affectionate look at his beloved child, “as to think of doing that immediately; a few years may make me a grandfather to a child of my Evadne’s.”

“A child of mine!” repeated the countess.

“Yes my love,” returned the count, “and why not? would you not then wish to be a mother my Evadne?”

The little Sophia was now placed on the lap of lady Glenroy, and the lovely child was caressing her with all the affectionate warmth of its artless disposition, and she replied—

“Yes my father, I acknowledge that maternal feelings must be delightful. To press to your heart the

innocent being you have given birth to—to trace in its sweet lineaments the living object whom you love—  
**Oh! yes, yes my father, I feel that to be then a mother must be transport, bliss unutterable.”**

Count Rosalvie looked at the countess with keen expression; for as she repeated these emphatic words she sighed heavily, and her eyes were filled with tears. He could no longer repress the strong inclination which he felt to make some inquiries relative to her union with the earl of Glenroy. This was not a time for restraint, and her guileless heart contained no sentiment which could not be immediately conveyed to the ear of her kind indulgent parent. One circumstance alone as she repeated to her father all she could recollect from the days of her infancy lingered yet behind; and that was her love for Henry Montreville. Yet to dissemble with her father—and with such a father—she rejected a thought so unjust, so undutiful; and feeling that, to her parent she owed the most implicit confidence, she began to unveil her whole heart. It is true she trembled; her bosom heaved with almost convulsive sighs; when, arriving at that period where she first acknowledged her regard for him, how eloquent, how sacred is pure love. The countess described Montreville to her father in the most animated, the most glowing colours; his gentle manners, his ingenious disposition, his fine understanding, and his charitable propensities. She now proceeded to recount the particulars of that eventful day when he had departed from Bloomfield House; of her having pledged those sacred vows to this dear object of her first and early love, which nothing but the hand of death should have torn asunder”——

“Dead!” cried count Rosalvie.

The countess covering her face with her handkerchief, sobbed aloud. “Oh! too surely so my father,” at length uttered she, “had he been living, no mortal power should have compelled your Evadne to have been the wife of another. I gave my hand to lord Glenroy, but I deceived him not. I assured him that my affections were buried in the grave of my lost but still adored Henry.”

“My dear unhappy child!” exclaimed count Rosalvie, “I fear that you have been made a wretched sacrifice; but who informed you of this incident? how gained you the intelligence of the decease of Montreville?”

“Oh! it was past all doubt,” returned the countess; “contained in the hand-writing of his distracted mother. Had there existed but a shadow of a doubt your Evadne had been blest!”

“Have you this letter now in your possession, my dearest child?” said count Rosalvie.

“Yes, my father,” returned the countess. “After my recovery from a dangerous illness, I begged it of my uncle, to whom it was addressed, and he gave it to me: but wherefore that question, my father?”

Count Rosalvie paused a considerable time; he put his hand to his head; he seemed struck with some sudden thought, and then replied—

“My question is immaterial, my love; nor do I remember now why I asked it. Compose yourself, my sweet Evadne, you are greatly agitated.”

“I am indeed,” replied the countess; “for it is a subject which encompasses my whole soul. How I loved him—how I mourned for him!” and the coun-

tess wept with fresh emotion, as she leaned on the arm of count Rosalvie ; a little recovered by the caresses of her father, she proceeded to relate to him the ardent attachment of lord Glenroy ; of his unremitting attention to her during her indisposition ; and lastly, of the obligations which, conceiving herself to be under to him, had induced her to become his wife : of the liberal settlement he had afterwards made upon her, and of his persevering kindness since he had become her husband. “ And yet some dreadful mystery envelopes his character,” continued the countess ; “ could that be explained I were comparatively happy.” She then imparted to count Rosalvie having twice heard those mysterious sighs, once in the pine grove, and again in an apartment of the castle, concealing only from the knowledge of her father the agitation of poor old Hannah, whose conversation she thought she was not at liberty to reveal, still recollecting her mysterious words—

“ My life depends upon your silence.”

Count Rosalvie, forcing a smile, endeavoured to persuade the countess that she had been mistaken ; but it was plain to be perceived that astonishment and concern had taken possession of every feature ; and there was not a doubt but he entertained some unpleasant impressions of the earl’s character.

“ I confess I do not like mystery in any shape whatsoever,” said he ; “ but, my dear child, time only can unravel it. Let us hope the time will be favourable.”

“ But the music, my father, which you yesterday heard in the pine grove,” said the countess.

“ Was a little remarkable,” replied count Rosal-

vie ; “ but we will dismiss the subject, my love, it is by no means pleasing ; nor do I wish you to yield in any degree to its impressions.”

Sir William Harman and Miss Gurney now entered the room, and suspended for the present all further conversation between the countess and her now deeply afflicted father. She had by no means recovered her agitation when they came in ; she was pale, and trembled at every gust of wind through the gothic windows of the apartment in which they sat.

“ For Heaven’s sake, my dear countess,” said Sir William, rubbing his hands by the fire as he drew near, “ do let us disperse the blue devils by keeping up a blazing fire, for it is confoundedly cold. The northern winds that blow at this season of the year so keenly from the mountains, tell a winter’s tale, my lady.”

According to Sir William’s desire more wood was placed on the fire, and supper was just brought upon the table in an adjoining apartment, when they were disturbed by an unusual noise and confused murmur of voices, which seemed either to be approaching to the castle of Glenroy, or passing at no great distance from it.



## CHAPTER XL.

Count Rosalvie started from his seat, and approached the window in order to listen more distinctly to the sounds, when more than one voice, demanding instant admittance into the castle, saluted his ear.

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed the countess, "what can this mean?"

At this instant a voice still louder than the rest, and which they could plainly distinguish to be that of Smart, repeated—

"Lights there, lights! my master! my master! quick, open the gates!"

The consternation now became general—the countess fainted in the arms of Miss Gurney. On the gates being thrown open, Smart rushed in, exclaiming—

"Look to the countess! His lordship is wounded dangerously; I fear mortally. Let us convey him to his chamber, while we hasten to procure a surgeon from the village."

Some enquiries being made, Smart shook his head and answered—

"I am forbid to explain."

Six Highlanders now approached, bearing on a litter the body of the earl; he was insensible, and his features scarcely discernable, from the profusion of blood which covered every part of him. Every creature sprang forward to lend their assistance to bear him from the litter; but count Rosalvie was the most active and useful on the occasion; entreating Miss Gurney to take his beloved child out of the way, he

he assisted in placing the bleeding body of the earl on the first couch they could arrive at; and taking from his own medicine chest, which he was always in the possession of, styptics, to stop the effusion of blood, he endeavoured to examine where the earl had received his wound, and was shocked to discover that it proceeded from a pistol ball having penetrated his left shoulder. All therefore that could be done till the surgeon arrived was instantly performed by count Rosalvie; the styptics were applied; and the blood carefully washed from the earl's face;—his clothes interfering with the wound being gently cut way. He still breathed; and appeared to be recovering from a state of insensibility;—the anguish of his wound causing him to utter the most piercing groans. He opened his eyes for a moment;—but, encountering count Rosalvie, who was bathing his temples, they were again closed.—

In half an hour the surgeon arrived with his assistant. He was a gentleman in high repute; and they relied much upon his judgment. Dismissing all unnecessary attendants from the apartment, he proceeded to inspect his lordship's wound; and declared that the ball was capable of being extracted. He apprehended he was in extreme danger; but till the operation had taken place, could not ultimately say that the wound was mortal. He desired that his lordship might instantly be conveyed to bed; and strong restoratives being administered, he underwent the operation, which was performed with uncommon skill and management; and from the moment that the ball was extracted, and the wound dressed, the earl appeared to suffer but

little pain. He was now perfectly sensible ; and the first words he uttered were—

“ My wife !—the countess !—I must see her immediately.”

“ I fear,” cried count Rosalvie, “ you are not sufficiently composed ; and my poor child is dreadfully shocked ; desist my dear lord from seeing her to night.”

The surgeon now interfered ; intreating that his lordship would not expose himself to further agitation that night ; and assuring him that, a few hours rest, would work miracles in his favor : that an interview with lady Glenroy could not be attended but by both experiencing emotions which would disturb his mind and inflame his wound : and the surgeon added that, the least perturbation would totally destroy the effects of the medicine which he had administered. He trusted therefore that his lordship would prudently abide by his directions ; as at present he entertained the most flattering hopes of his amendment.

Lord Glenroy attempted to smile, but it was incredulously, at what the surgeon had advanced.—

“ No my good doctor,” cried he in a firm and resolute tone of voice, “ I believe on this subject that you and I must venture to disagree. I feel that my life is only protracted for a very short period, perhaps for a few days, and that is all the time I wish it should extend to.”

Observing that count Rosalvie started and appeared much shocked—

“ Do not my dear count I implore you,” continued he, “ feel thus concerned ;—I am a wretch—I do not deserve your commiseration !—I have been guilty of

an act of cruelty and injustice!—I sought happiness by the sacrifice of another's repose!—I possessed myself of an angel by treachery!—think you that I could escape the secret monitor within!—No!—I have lived in fear; but, I shall die in penitence!

“For heaven's sake my dear lord,” cried count Rosalvie, “endeavour to compose yourself; and rest assured, whatever I have judged unfavorable from appearances, they are not of that tendency as to exclude you from the forgiveness of your Evadne's father: be therefore comforted. When you are better you shall talk to me; to night you must promise to be silent.”

“To night then,” said the earl in a deeply affecting tone of voice, “I obey your injunctions;—to-morrow, you must listen to the confession of a penitent. Evadne will not curse me, and I shall die blessed.”—

At this moment, no persuasions of Miss Gurney or of Sir William, could withhold the countess from rushing into the apartment. She had caught the earl's last words, and was in an instant at his bedside. Her convulsive sobs startled him; and in a voice scarcely audible she uttered,—

“Curse you, my dear dear lord!—your own Evadne curse you!—No! I shall ever bless you!—Live then! I charge you, live!—Oh! live for your Evadne!”

A scene now followed which beggared all description. The earl no sooner beheld the countess than he fainted; and it was a long time before he gave signs of the least returning sensibility; and then he was so weak, as to be almost incapable of addressing her, pronouncing these emphatic words,—

“Evadne, I have wronged you.”

He sunk again exhausted on his pillow ; and the surgeon flew to his assistance, declaring to count Rosalvie that, if the countess did not immediately retire, he could not answer but the consequences might be fatal to the earl. In a state of mind therefore which needed nothing but a total suspension of every faculty she was led from the apartment by her father, and watched with the most tender assiduity by her sympathizing friends Miss Gurney and Sir William Harman ; while count Rosalvie, the surgeon, and other attendants were stationary in the chamber of the wretched and now apparently expiring earl.

The dawn of morning, which had so often waked to happiness the inhabitants of Glenroy Castle, now approached, to witness a house of mourning and affliction. No blazing fire illumined the deserted apartment where the family usually breakfasted ; no bustle was heard in the servant's hall ; no ringing of bells proclaimed that the family was risen : all was silent, comfortless, and dejected. Count Rosalvie appeared for an instant to console his beloved child, and prepare her for a scene, which would, he feared, in spite of all human efforts, eventually take place, the dissolution of her husband. The surgeon, apprehending the danger of a mortification, had already called in further aid, and a physician now attended ; but his conclusive opinion exactly coincided with that of the surgeon ; pronouncing that, a mortification was all they had to dread ; and which it was even more than probable no human skill could now retard. The earl slept ; and they watched with no inconsiderable anxiety the moment he should awake ; the physician hinting to count Rosalvie that,

should their apprehensions be verified, his lordship's dissolution would rapidly follow beyond all power of art or medicine.

Count Rosalvie was exceedingly affected; he prepared his daughter to expect an awful change, which would ultimately prove fatal, in the situation of her husband.—

“Evadne,” cried count Rosalvie, while the eyes of this excellent parent were filled with tears, “the same destiny which preserved your father in the bosom of the ocean from sinking to a watery grave, and which snatched him from the jaws of captivity, now hangs over my beloved child! It warns you to recall your fleeting spirits to the active duties which the present moment requires; and to support this shock with fortitude. Let not your mind then be weakened, your resolution impaired; but, possessing yourself of courage, hasten to the chamber of your dying husband; he has something to disclose, of what nature I cannot tell, which it is necessary you should be acquainted with. Let not useless lamentations, which can now avail nothing, disturb his last moments: and remember my child that, though it is constantly the lot of human nature to err, it is invariably the attribute of heaven to pardon and forgive.”

Both the countess and count her father were now summoned to the chamber of lord Glenroy. He was awake, and appeared tranquil and composed; declaring to the doctors that he felt perfectly free from all degree of pain. He expressed a wish immediately to see and converse with count Rosalvie; and without the least symptom of fear or agitation added,—

“For I feel my dissolution to be rapidly approach-

ing; and that, notwithstanding I experience no torture from my wound, my hours, in this world, are already numbered."

From the moment that the earl had confessed himself free from pain, the doctors shook their heads, declaring to count Rosalvie that, it was but too evident, a mortification had already taken place: that his lordship might probably linger till the ensuing day; but, in the present case, even that was doubtful, every hope being now at an end.

The countess, when she approached the bedside of the earl, was shocked at the change which a few hours had already made in his pallid countenance. She trembled and could scarcely support herself; and, in spite of all the resolution which she had formed, nature and sensibility were predominant; and her tears fell fast upon the cold hand which she pressed to her lips.

"Evadne," cried the earl, still looking at her with the most impassioned tenderness, "I think you love me better than you did!—Habit, indeed, has done much: and I trust that, after my death, you will have no cause to curse my memory. Oh! could I also hope you would pardon the cruel deception I practiced to obtain you for my wife I should die happy!"

The countess could not trust her voice to make a reply; the words she now heard from the lips of the earl shocked and surprised her beyond the power of expression; and she waited in breathless expectation, wishing, yet dreading, to hear an explanation.

The earl was desirous that all should leave the apartment but the countess and count Rosalvie. Supported on every side with pillows, he then attempted

to raise his head, and to address his weeping wife; demanding first to know, if Smart had communicated any part of the proceedings of the day on which he had quitted the Castle of Glenroy with the intention of setting out for Monmouthshire; and whether he had informed them by what means he returned in the situation they beheld him.

“ I ventured to make the inquiry,” said count Rosalvie, “ but I found that he was obstinately bent on concealing every particle of this dreadful affair, alleging for his motives that, he had received your commands not to breathe a syllable to human being.”

“ He had so,” cried the earl, “ and I am glad to find he has been so faithful to his trust. And now my Evadne, I am doomed to shock your tender nature by a confession which will make you for a moment abhor the sight of me: and yet my heart bleeds at the recollection of the pangs I have already taught that gentle heart to feel by the supposed death”——

The earl paused; and the countess, forgetting at that moment all but her expiring husband, exclaimed—

“ Heavenly powers! my dearest lord, what mean you? whose death?”

“ Was there not a being whom Evadne once loved?” returned the earl.

The countess gasped for breath—she leaned on her father for support—while she feebly articulated, in the supposition that the senses of the earl were now wandering,—

“ My dear lord, why do you recall to your mind such images only to distress you? and why wrong your Evadne in supposing she indulges in reflections so injurious to your repose? You know I loved Mon-



treville ; but you likewise know that he exists no longer, your rival, or your foe : he is dead, and"——

The earl seemed for a moment to borrow new strength ; a hectic passed over his cheek in bright and crimson glows, while every feature became agitated and convulsed with passion, and in a voice of encreased perturbation, he pronounced with great violence——

" He is living—Montreville is still living!"

" Living!" cried the terrified countess ; " Montreville still living? Then what a wretch is Evadne. Oh, Glenroy ! cruel unjust man!"

The earl now relapsed again into insensibility ; he continued to grow more feeble, and faintly articulated——

" Evadne, do not curse me."

Perceiving his situation, the countess flew to support him, and in a voice almost broken by sobs, exclaimed——

" No, my lord, I will never curse you ; though you have rendered me the most miserable perjured wretch in existence. I will not curse you, but on my bended knees I implore Heaven to pardon you for the injustice you have been guilty of, as fervently as I do now ; but oh ! my lord, I sink under the burthen of the shock I have received, was then the hand of Montreville levelled at your life ? is Henry become a murderer ?"

" Do not deceive yourself," cried the earl ; " of that he is innocent, and I acquit him of every intention to do me wrong ; no, Evadne, your unhappy husband dies by his own hand !"

" Almighty Powers !" exclaimed the countess, bursting into an agony of tears, " what could urge you to an act so desperate ?"

“Self-condemnation,” said the earl, “the stings of an unquiet conscience—the thorn of compunction—the sight of your virtuous father overpowered me. I felt I was unworthy to share in his confidence or to merit his esteem; this depressed my spirits and harassed my mind, and a sudden meeting with Montreville, whom I encountered in a cottage on the brow of the mountain, belonging to one of my own domestics, hurried me on to madness. I believed him to be at this period in a far distant country, and conceiving that he was now come to claim a full redress for all his wrongs, and dreading a public exposure of the villainy I had been guilty of towards him, without giving him time to explain the purport of his visit to Duncan’s Cottage, I challenged him in language his injured spirit could not brook, which he answered with terms of cold but dignified contempt. I then demanded satisfaction; we met in a field not far from the enclosure of my own grounds, no other witnesses by than my servant Smart and Duncan Campbell. My rage knew no bounds when I beheld him advancing towards me; and I was about to level my pistol at his breast, when he instantaneously discharged the contents of his into the air, and as far as I can now recollect in these words addressed me:—

“My Lord, if you behold in me a man who has ever injured you, I bare my bosom to your just resentment; the wrongs you have done me I will not revenge in the manner you propose. I am no coward, yet I call on Heaven to witness that I cannot be the assassin of Evadne’s husband. I came not hither to invade your peace nor hers; but now I go a willing exile from my native land, hopeless ever to return.

Farewell, my lord, and may that happiness be your portion of which you have eternally robbed Montreville."

In the frenzy of the moment, hurried on by the impetuous tide of ungoverned passion, and struck to the heart by this unexampled instance of generosity in my injured rival, before Campbell had power to arrest my arm from its direful purpose, I had discharged my pistol, and the wrongs of the innocent have fallen on the guilty alone.

Oh, Evadne ! life is now ebbing fast away, embrace for the last time your expiring husband ; pronounce once more your forgiveness, and you Rosalvie extend your blessing with that of your lovely incomparable child."

The tears of the countess could now no longer be restrained, and she sobbed aloud ; at the same time all that could be said to console the unhappy sufferer in these awful and affecting moments, was uttered by her and her compassionate father, and again repeated by them, to the dying penitent ; and the count perceiving that he was much exhausted by the efforts he had made to converse with them, instantly called in the doctors ; they administered some cordials, and pronounced that he might yet survive the night, but that the morning would witness his dissolution.

The countess endeavoured, by every means possible to hide the anguish of a deeply lacerated and tortured heart, by imposing the strictest restraint on her wounded feelings in the presence of the dying earl, at whose bedside she became stationary with count Rosalvie. He continued at intervals to address them : he desired that some alterations might take place in

the nature of his will, bequeathing the sum of five thousand pounds as a legacy to Miss Gurney, who had always been a great favourite with him, and five hundred pounds to his servant Smart, with the like sum to Duncan Campbell, as a reward for their long fidelity and attachment. After which the whole of his splendid possessions, both landed and personal property, devolved to his beloved wife, the so greatly adored Evadne.

She timidly enquired if there was no person or persons to whom her dear lord would still wish to leave some memorial of his regard ; the mysterious sighs now rising to her recollection.

The earl paused, and deeply sighing replied—

“No, best and dearest of women ! not at this period : once indeed there lived an object who, had she existed, would not have been forgotten—Poor Louisa of Strathaven !”

The countess shuddered.

“Yes, Evadne !” uttered the earl, “I acknowledge Louisa to have been one of the victims I have made ! I triumphed over her innocence, but she faded like the drooping lily which she most resembled, and soon I laid her in the dust. Her portrait still remains in the castle, long neglected, for I could never bear to look on it without compunction and remorse.

Lady Glenroy felt, by the sensation she now experienced, that she had often looked at the beautiful resemblance of the ill-fated Louisa, but was unequal to the task of confessing it at such a moment.

“Recollect, Evadne,” said the earl, whose respiration became every moment more difficult, “that I now confess to you the letter which you supposed to be in

the hand writing of Mrs. Montreville was forged by me. Several letters came addressed to you from Montreville, which were destroyed by Mrs. Bloomfield, after she had agreed to join in the plot to deceive you with the supposed confirmation of his death. The two last received she delivered into my hands; you will find them among my papers of this vile transaction. I solemnly acquit the colonel of bearing the least part. He actually believed, and still believes Montreville to be no longer in existence. It was I, Evadne, who alone acted the villain's part after his departure from Bloomfield House. I placed emissaries to watch his proceedings at Plymouth, where I learned that he soon joined his ship; and he was no sooner completely out of England, than I formed the diabolical plan of cheating you into a belief of his death. I succeeded, but the pangs I beheld you suffer preyed continually upon my conscience, and, as you may well remember, some time previous to our marriage, that I was often reduced to the most abject state of despondence. I hailed the moment of your recovery from illness to be the omen of my future bliss! My unwearied attentions at length made some impressions on your heart; I beheld it with rapture; again I solicited and you complied; and gained a wife, oh! Evadne, by treachery."

The most violent spasms now seized the earl, yet he eagerly grasped the hand of the now almost fainting countess; his eyes grew dim, but while they possessed the power of discernment they were turned to his wife. Suddenly he feebly articulated—

"Evadne—where—is—your—father?"

"What do you wish, my dear lord?" said count

Rosalvie, who was kneeling in fervent prayer by his side.

“ To—to——bless——you !”

The earl pronounced with considerable difficulty—his cold hand was sinking gradually from the feverish one of his Evadne’s, and the last words which yet quivered on his pale lips, were—

“ Evadne——pray——for”——

The sentence remained unfinished, all further respiration being suddenly stopped ; and the doctor gently unclosing the curtain, whispered to count Rosalvie that the unfortunate earl was gone for ever.

They instantly conveyed the weeping countess from the apartment, where throwing herself into the arms of her beloved Rhoda, she gave way to those emotions without restraint which she had for many hours endeavoured to stifle in the presence of her expiring lord ! A thousand amiable qualities arose to her recollection in the character of the deceased earl, and she wept most bitterly whenever she reflected how awfully and dreadfully he had terminated his existence ; handing down to posterity an useful lesson, that permanent felicity can never be obtained through the commission of unworthy actions. Although our path be strewn with roses, our couch a bed of down, yet amidst its blushing leaves will still be found a thorn ; nor can balmy sleep lull the senses to forgetfulness, when conscious error is the monitor within.

Evadne was indeed a remarkable instance of the peculiar care and wise dispensations of Providence, which can only be attributed to her possessing those qualities which render human actions divine. An humble opinion of her own merits—a generous

acknowledgment of the virtues of others—a tender disposition—a gentle spirit—and a pure heart.

In the full bloom of youth and beauty, lady Glenroy was now the sole heiress of unbounded wealth and a magnificent mansion ; but though she retained the perfection of superior loveliness, a soft and melancholy expression dwelt on every lovely feature, and the living Henry Montreville, now present to her imagination, would now and then unconsciously steal from her gentle bosom a sigh.

Victim to cruel artifice and of the vilest imposition, she was never heard to breathe a murmur against her deceased lord, but cherished his memory with every mark of the most becoming respect.

The earl had been dead nearly a twelvemonth, when the colonel paid a visit to his niece at the Castle of Glenroy, where every explanation took place that was necessary between himself and count Rosalvie. His dear Lucy evincing the greatest contrition, lady Glenroy forgave her : but this lady by no means escaped from her share of mortification and concern ; and she was never in the presence of the count Rosalvie without, to use her own elegant phrase, “ being in a prodigious fluster, and feeling,” as she declared to the colonel, “ somehow quite comical.”

It being the wish of her dear father, the countess very soon adopted the little Sophia Courtney ; who was now a resident at the castle ; often amusing, by her childish tricks and cheerful prattle, her pretty man, as she always called count Rosalvie. She had likewise witnessed the happy union of her beloved poetess with Sir William ; and as they resided near the castle, were almost inseperable companions.

The portrait of poor Louisa was now, by the countess's order, placed in an elegant frame, and decorated her dressing room : and the little Sophia, running to it every morning repeated after the countess,—

“ Poor Louisa of Strathaven.”

Count Rosalvie one morning reproved her for so saying, when, she artlessly replied,—

“ I am sure it cannot be a naughty word.”

“ Why so,” cried Rosalvie.

“ Because my mamma Glenroy always says so ; and I do so love to hear her ; for do you know that she is my darling.”

“ Indeed, then what am I ?” said count Rosalvie.

“ Oh ! you are my darling too.”

She was now rewarded with a kiss, and her offence forgiven.

In looking over some papers of the late earl's, in which the countess was one morning employed assisted by old Hannah, she suddenly encountered the well-known signature of Montreville. She turned pale ; and complaining that she felt a sudden faintness, burst into tears.

“ Why my dear lady, cried Hannah, “ what can make you so ill ? but——but”——

And Hannah made a full stop ; while she evinced much embarrassment.

“ But what Hannah ?” said the countess.

“ Only madam that, I thought how it would be ;” returned Hannah.

“ What be ?” said the countess, and who are you talking of ?”

“ Oh ! madam,” replied Hannah, with an arch smile, “ I was not talking ; I was only thinking.”



"Pray Hannah, do not be ridiculous;" said the countess, "I am not in a humour just now to attend to your pleasantry."

"Angry or pleased, all will come out;" returned Hannah, a little pettishly, and, indeed madam, I think you are unkind. I thought you knew your poor old servant better, to suppose she would take a liberty without having a reason for it."

With the smile of a seraph the countess held out her hand as a peace offering, with—

"Well Hannah, what have you to say?"

Hannah's eyes now sparkled with pleasure; and smoothing down the folds of her double black crape handkerchief, she thus addressed her lovely mistress."

"I have heard say that, it is quite out of the power of a woman to keep a secret; but, as I have a christian soul to be saved, I have kept one above this twelve-month. Yes, it was just about three months before my lord Glenroy died that I was so frightened in the Pine Grove."——

"The pine grove!" repeated the countess with astonishment and fear; which Hannah observing, exclaimed,—

"Yes, my lady: but it was no ghost I can assure you! true flesh and blood! his very self!"——

"Whose self?" exclaimed the countess, trembling so excessively she could scarcely support herself."

To which Hannah instantly replied,—

"Mr. Montreville madam, his very self; Mr. Henry, as large as life."

"Merciful powers!" exclaimed the countess, the mystery is now at an end, and I cannot doubt any longer but the sighs which I first heard in the pine

grove, and on the night I was so dreadfully alarmed in the little chamber, proceeded also from him."

"As sure as you are alive madam; but I will tell you all about it;" cried Hannah.

"You must know that, one fine summer's evening, when you and lady Harman had walked out, I thought I would just take a bit of a stroll myself; with that I popt on my bonnet and cloak, and took a turn through the pine grove. It might be half an hour, I think, that I continued walking; when something—what shape it was then I could not tell, made a noise from behind some trees; and, as I thought at that time, vanished away before me. You may be sure madam that, I took to my heels fast enough, and stopped my ears, and shut my mouth as much as I could; when, at the little white gate, bounce I came up against a man! madam, it was Mr. Montreville. I was just going to scream as loud as I could, when, taking hold of me with one hand, and taking a pistol from his pocket with the other, he addressed me in these words:—

"Hannah, you are the first person who has discovered me: swear not to reveal it to any human being, and I will suffer you to escape. If, hereafter, I find that either the earl, or the countess, are apprised of my coming hither,—mark me, your life shall answer for it!"

"You may be sure madam that I was ready enough to go down on my knees and take the oath: for Mr. Montreville, who was once as gentle as a lamb, now looked like a roaring lion; and I took a solemn and sacred oath that I would never disclose this transaction to a living soul. He then let me go, and I re-

turned to the castle more dead than alive ; and full of the most frightful conjectures ; for I have heard tell that people crossed in love will do strange things : yet to be sure, thought I, there can be no great danger, for Mr. Henry loved the ground my lady walked on. Still I was terribly afraid that your ladyship would see him. Well, to come to the end of my story, you know you came home that night very poorly, for you looked as pale as ashes ; and so did lady Harman I well remember ; and my master was quite uneasy at your staying out so late."

" True Hannah," cried the countess, " and on that very night Rhoda and myself heard a deep sigh as we sat conversing in the pine grove ; and, terrified and alarmed, could not imagine from whence it proceeded."

The countess sighed deeply ; and in a softer accent added,—

" Ah ! how little did I then imagine that sigh was breathed forth from the bosom of my much-wronged Henry !"

" Ah ! who indeed !" exclaimed Hannah ; and in a low whisper continued her tale to her deeply attentive and penetrated mistress.

## CHAPTER XLI.

“ You may remember, madam,” continued Hannah, “ that evening you persisted in going to the little chamber to look at your favourite picture.”

“ I can never forget it ;” uttered the countess.

“ Nor I, I am sure,” returned Hannah ; “ for I verily thought something dreadful was going to happen that night, and that’s the truth of it.”

“ How came Montreville to be concealed in that apartment !” said the countess ; “ and how could he gain admittance into the castle without being discovered by the servants ?”

“ You know, madam, my life was in his hands,” cried Hannah, “ and I durst not disobey his commands ; and in crossing the meadows that morning, I saw Mr. Montreville coming towards me ; I trembled every limb of me ; though, to be sure, he did not look quite so terrible as before ; but taking hold of my hand, gave such a piteous sigh, as would have melted the heart of a stone ;—

“ ‘ Hannah,’ cried he, ‘ I think you will not betray the confidence I have reposed in you : there is yet one thing more which you must do to serve me.’

“ I told him I was ready to obey his commands in every thing but to hurt my mistress.’

“ ‘ Your mistress !’ cried he, ‘ and if you believe me madam, his poor eyes were full of tears ;’ ‘ hurt your mistress ! Oh ! no : I would perish every atom first.’

“ Upon this, madam, I ventured to ask him, in what manner I could be of service.

“ ‘ By admitting me into the castle when it is dark,’ cried he.

“ ‘ Holy Mary, sir !’ said I, ‘ if you should chance to see my master, or my lady, what a scrape you would get poor Hannah in !’

“ ‘ Woman !’ cried he, ‘ I will have no trifling : do as I command you.’ He then frowned so terribly, madam, that I was glad to promise to let him in any hour he might choose to appoint, without daring to ask him why and wherefore he should risk his life by venturing into the castle. When it was dark I let him in by the private door that faces the Western turret ; and of which I only am permitted to keep the key :— but, Holy Virgin ! how little did I think that you would take it in your head on that very night to visit the little chamber where I had concealed him. You know what followed : and now, madam, I hope you will allow I had pretty good reason for keeping this affair a secret.”

“ You had indeed my poor Hannah !” said the countess, much moved by the recital ; “ and how much am I indebted to you for your fidelity ! Poor, unhappy, Montreville !—what became of him afterwards ? did he remain all night in the castle ?”

“ Oh ! the heavens forbid !” cried Hannah ; all night ! I should not have slept a wink if he had ! No : when all was quiet, and you and my master was fairly off to bed, I returned to him again ; when I found him poor dear soul, shivering with cold, in a corner of the room, and sighing as if his heart would break. Upon seeing me, he exclaimed,—

“ ‘ Hannah, my purpose in coming hither is now accomplished ! I have seen her—yes, her on whom my

heart still doats with unutterable fondness!—she who has robbed me of all but my life and honor! Yes, once more, and for the last time I have beheld Evadne!”

The countess pulled out her handkerchief and strained it to her eyes to hide her emotions from Hannah, who continued,—

“Mr. Montreville, madam, then slipped into my hand, and indeed before I was aware of it, five guineas and this ring; look, madam, it has a curious motto, and is methinks vastly pretty.”

The device was a bleeding heart, and the motto ran thus—“I change but in death.”

Lady Glenroy trembled nearly to fainting as she examined it, and returning it to Hannah, demanded to know if that was the last time she had beheld Montreville?

“Never from that hour have I set eyes on him,” replied Hannah; “but I know what I think; he will soon make his appearance again, depend upon it; we shall soon see his ghost in the pine grove; yes, I know how it will be.”

There Hannah made a full stop. She saw that this account of Montreville pleased, at the same moment that it depressed her lovely mistress; she therefore did not hesitate to push the point still farther, by suddenly remarking, to the no small embarrassment of the countess, that she thought she had worn her weeds a considerable time longer than was the fashion; for her part she could not abide the sight of so much black, concluding this last observation with—

“It was a long lane indeed that had no turning—it was a sad heart that never rejoiced; and so forth”——

Soon as the countess was ultimately left alone to her own reflections, she involuntarily sighed at what Montreville must have endured, believing her to be unfaithful to her vows. Was he still dear to her? her conscious heart replied yes! and her throbbing pulse, every time she heard his name echoed by Hannah, was sufficient to remind her that he still retained the same place he ever had in her affections. She searched for the letters the earl confessed to have had in his possession, and looking where the signature first caught her eye, soon distinguished them from the loose papers which lay scattered about the table. They were both addressed for Miss Le Burney, Bloomfield House, the last of which being most expressive of his ardent attachment, was as follows:—

“ I went this morning nerved to extacy in the hope of finding a letter from the beloved of my soul! Imagine my disappointment on being informed at the Post House that letters had arrived from England, but none of these were addressed to the unfortunate Montreville. What am I to conclude from your silence? is Montreville forgotten, and by Evadne? am I no longer dear to Evadne, or has fate destined you to the arms of that presumptuous lord? Answer me, most adored and loveliest of women! is Montreville blest or miserable? Alas! one word will be sufficient to stamp me the veriest wretch in creation! Should you indeed have cancelled vows made in the face of Heaven! vows which attesting angels were called to witness! know, Evadne, that even then I never will

upbraid you, nor ever can believe you false, till it is past doubt confirmed by your own confession, to—

Your unhappy

HENRY MONTREVILLE.

The countess had no sooner cast her eyes over the contents of this letter, than she burst into an agony of tears ; and it was in this situation that the count Rosalvie discovered her when he entered her dressing room. He started, and retreated a few paces back, when his daughter giving him Montreville's letter continued to weep without interruption.

Count Rosalvie having read it and placed it on the table, declared he could not avoid feeling a strong interest in the fate of this unfortunate young man, who discovered a mind to be at once ingenuous and noble, and added, with a sort of an arch smile—

“ How shall we act to enter into explanations with him ? where can the truant be found ? ”

The countess, with deep kindling blushes, disclosed to her father what Hannah had just imparted to her concerning Montreville, at which he exclaimed—

“ The invisible musician of the pine grove, I have no longer the smallest doubt ; well, my love, be composed, and recollect that your bosom is still as free from guile, and you are as much worthy the affections of this young man as the first hour you became acquainted with him. Artifice was contrived to disunite and separate you from each other ; but in it you was no accomplice, and consequently no offender. Therefore dry those tears, for if I am not greatly deceived, Montreville still loves you with unabating tenderness, and I have a shrewd guess by your blushes



that he is not quite an object of indifference with your ladyship."

Dinner being announced, both father and daughter descended together to the drawing-room, where we will leave them for the present engaged in delightful converse with their sincerely attached friends Sir William Harman and his charming wife.

## CHAPTER XLII.

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No sooner was Mr. and Mrs. Morrison and Adolphus fully made acquainted with the history of the bonnie lady o' Glenroy castle ; with that also which related to their so highly valued and most inestimable friend, captain Montreville, than they cherished the most favourable impressions of the angelic widow, whom they now constantly were in the habit of daily beholding in her accustomed rambles and favourite walks, in the wild entangled woods and delightful plantations around the romantic scenery of Glenroy castle ; in which, however, she was seldom unaccompanied by her father, count Rosalvie. He visited even the poor cottages with his lovely daughter whenever she made her customary contributions of private benevolence, which were frequent and liberal to the highest degree ; nor did count Rosalvie think it beneath his exalted rank to be with his heavenly child when an invalid cottager called forth her compassionate attention. Thither he would go in the most inclement and

tempestuous weather, and kneel beside the bed “where parting life was laid,” with the most pious and fervent devotion, setting forth a pattern of christianity in the example as well as the precept, which never failed to awaken the most lively gratitude in the hearts of the poor sufferers whom their kindness and bounty had relieved. It was at this particular and precise season of affairs at Glenroy Castle, when the father and the daughter shared equally the blessings of the poor and the praise of all the country round, that the long absent and regretted Henry was, by some wise interposition of Almighty Providence, once more directed to the leading star of all that contained his earthly happiness, his adored Evadne; now the widowed wife of his once hated rival, and most mortal foe.

’Tis true that at the sight of Duncan Campbell, in his new character of landlord of the Falcon Inn, captain Montreville evinced the utmost astonishment, curiosity, and surprise; but to the “round unvarnished tale” which the honest Scotchman afterwards unfolded, and of the awful manner in which the late unfortunate earl had terminated his mortal career; of the sufferings which his lovely countess had in consequence endured; of the arrival of count Rosalvie, and his affecting discovery of his child, and of other mysteries which Duncan knew very well how to interpret to Montreville. Such were the visible effects upon his surprised and agitated feelings, that he burst into an involuntary flood of tears, and exclaimed—

“Still, Duncan, Evadne never can be mine.”

On which Duncan somewhat passionately replied—

“The d—l tak the mon that wad be putting you

asunder. Wha has a better title to the bonnie leedy o' Glenroy Castle than your vary sel, I wad be glad to ken? an ye will not hae her when she will be ay ready to fa in yere arms, gin ye will but spear to her, ye'll nae be worthy o' sic a treasure."

Whatever the result of this conversation between captain Montreville and his warm-hearted host on this occasion, it did not appear to have been speedily adjusted by the former in the method for which poor Duncan was so heartily desirous, as, owing to some certain reason or other, he was implicitly commanded to conceal his arrival from the ear of lady Glenroy; and never to utter his name in her presence, or in the hearing of count Rosalvie, on pain of his eternal displeasure; an injunction which Duncan Campbell never afterwards disobeyed, and to which may be attributed his excessive caution to all questions which were put to him while Mr. and Mrs. Morrison and Adolphus were his guests. In the meanwhile, however, the lovely Rachel had more than once induced captain Montreville to overcome his natural repugnance to visit them at Vine cottage; and as time continued to ripen and improve the friendship which subsisted between them, he gradually threw of all reserve when conversing of the lovely widow; and in which it was perceptible, though unconscious to himself, that poor Montreville took no small delight. On those occasions Mrs. Morrison would exert her whole powers of eloquence in behalf of the countess, in order to bring about a meeting with the amiable pair, concluding as she always did with her usual archness of expression—

“ Well, time is on the wing, he won't stay to court

either of you, and when you are both growing old, why—

“ Growing old, Mrs. Morrison,” cried Montreville, with a deeply suppressed sigh ; and when that is the case shall I then cease to love her ? no, madam, the man who truly loves will never change with the circumstances you have alluded ; she may grow old, but I shall love her still, even unto death.”

“ Why not see her then ? ” enquired Rachel. “ I cannot reconcile seeming contradictions with affections so ardent as you describe.

“ See her, madam,” said Montreville. “ If she requires it—certainly ; but pride, pride, Mrs. Morrison ; do you think a man so deeply injured as I have been has no pride ? ”

To which Mrs. Morrison very quaintly replied, a sort of smile playing on her dimpled lips—

“ But feeling, feeling, captain Montreville ; do you think a woman so deeply wounded as the lovely countess has unquestionably been, has no feeling ? come, I would wager that were you now unexpectedly to burst in upon the sight of lady Glenroy, that your pride would vanish in her presence like dewy mists before the rising sun.”

Captain Montreville’s face became flushed with a colour of the deepest dye, and the pretty Rachel, looking towards her husband with one of her archest smiles, added—

“ You make no reply to this, captain Montreville, therefore I may conclude that victory is mine.”

“ No, Mrs. Morrison, you shall not conclude any such thing,” cried captain Montreville, in the utmost

embarrassment, "though you seem to have formed a very tolerable opinion of the power of your own sex."

"Pardon me, captain Montreville," cried the lovely Rachel, in vain attempting to stifle a laugh, "my opinion of my own sex is formed from the knowledge I have of the weakness of yours."

"Thank you, Mrs. Morrison; I am extremely obliged to you for so flattering a compliment," uttered Montreville gravely; but the provoking Rachel, a thousand times more lovely than ever by the frank air of ingenuousness which was spread over her charming countenance, retorted—

"For truth, captain Montreville, for positively I have asserted nothing more; I don't deal in compliment, do I Leonard?"

"But you deal in magic Rachel; tell captain Montreville to look out of the window. I protest there is the lovely countess leaning on the arm of count Rosalvie. She has a basket, and I have no doubt is just returning from some charitable visit to the cottages of the poor, most of whom are now pensioners on her bounty. How beautiful she looks. Oh! how lovely is a woman when such propensities are the leading object of her pursuit. There is an absolute air this morning about the countess which is truly heavenly."

The curious and animated Rachel ran immediately to the window to obtain a glance at the tutelary saint of Glenroy Castle; the lovely benefactress of the neighbouring poor; but during the sentences which had escaped from the lips of Leonard, Montreville had vanished. At the very mention and certain probability of seeing Evadne enter Vine cottage, who had

stopped at the gate to speak to Peggy, he had flown beyond the possibility of Mrs. Morrison calling him back, unable to contend with the overwhelming tide of transports which filled his heart. Catching a transient glance of the well known face and still lovely form of his Evadne, he retired not to conceal, but to indulge in reflections of so pleasing a nature, that he feared to disclose them to mortal bosom, lest the charm might dissolve and leave him again a prey to melancholy and despair. Meanwhile the lively Rachel laughed heartily in his absence; and Adolphus having joined them, enquired if he had met Orlando in his way, who had fled on the approach of his enchanting Rosalind, whose bright eyes he had not the courage to encounter.

“If you mean captain Montreville,” cried Adolphus, “he is by this time on his journey to Montrose. He hurried by me with such rapidity, that I had scarce a moment to pay my duty to him. At the foot of the mountain I also observed the carriage of count Rosalvie, which appears to be waiting, consequently I was at no loss to what cause to attribute the extraordinary agitation of our friend Montreville; but why does he avoid the lovely countess, surely the sight of her cannot give him pain.”

“Because,” cried Mrs. Morrison, “like all your sex, he is not wanting in caprice; and though he adores the countess, and is dying to obtain an interview with her, yet his vanity suggests that her ladyship will be the first to seek it. I have been roasting him about it all the morning, and though I have detected his real sentiments a thousand times, yet he is proof against all my arguments to induce him to pay a visit

to Glenroy castle, there to confess his vows and be her slave."

"But this I am persuaded he will not do so easily as you may imagine," cried Adolphus; "his mind is much hurt, his feelings greatly wounded, and there is some little repugnance in again paying our vows at that shrine which we believe to have been inconstant, and deserted its faithful votary."

"Fie Mr. Walsingham! I will not allow you to be severe," cried Mrs. Morrison; "but this is the way with you men, you all find excuses for one another, conscious that you have been guilty of the same foibles; but notwithstanding all you have advanced about the philosophy of Montreville, you will find that the very moment he has an opportunity of conversing with the countess, that his heart will be the weaker vessel. Come I predict that a very short period puts an end to the widowhood of the bonnie leedy o' Glenroy castle, and that we shall as shortly hail our friend Montreville in his new character of Benedict the married man."

Adolphus, though he had the highest respect and veneration for the judgment of the lovely wife of his friend, could by no means agree with her on this determined point; when an occurrence, which took place several days after this serious debate, at Vine cottage, gave a proof that Mrs. Morrison was the best judge of a young philosopher's heart when it comes in contact with the charms of a beautiful and adored woman, which was fully exemplified by this unexpected discovery of each other's sentiments by the following catastrophe.

One morning as the countess sat at breakfast with

count Rosalvie, she remarked the fineness of the weather, which had just commenced with a season of uncommon beauty in the early part of spring, exclaiming, as she arranged some flowers in her vases, which were excessively delicate and beautiful—

“Oh! my dear father, how grateful, how delightful is spring!”

“I acknowledge it,” replied count Rosalvie; there is nothing in my opinion which produces such universal harmony as a fine spring morning; and every breathing object in creation is alive to its enchanting and invigorating influence; at first we see the birds begin to hail its sweet approach in chirping notes, perched on some straw built shed and here and there are seen to peck their scanty food with new delight.”

“Then the primrose,” cried the countess, “she comes forth with all her modest train, the violet, blue bell, and cowslip; and oh! how lovely to the eye, how regaling to the senses, are these sweet flowers of spring!”

Sir William Harman, who had just called in, smiled, and exclaimed—

“By Jove, my charming countess, you certainly will keep your word, and never become a woman of fashion; here are you praising a few paltry insignificant wild flowers, while those which please our fashionable ladies are only to be purchased at the milliner’s shops; to such a length indeed do they carry their absurdities, as actually to prefer the artificial to nature’s own works. In the month of June I once remember to have gathered a beautiful rose, and presented it to a lady of my acquaintance. I now think it my duty



to repeat to you the manner in which it was received. Disdaining to accept my present, she confessed her dislike to all natural flowers, and exclaimed—

“ Oh ! dear, sir, its quite unfashionable ; all artificial now I assure you.”

“ By Jove, madam,” cried I, “ but I believe that to be precisely the case with one half of you ! and I turned upon my heel, leaving her almost petrified at my audacity I suppose ; and this, my dear countess, is fashionable refinement ! Oh ! curse their fashions, say I !”

Count Rosalvie laughed most heartily at the manner in which Sir William had related this little anecdote ; and the countess smiled and called him a satirical creature.

Little Sophia Courtney now came running into the room with something in her frock, which she endeavoured to conceal from the observation of the countess, declaring she had been out with old Hannah to visit Margaret Campbell, and that Margaret had given her a number of fine things to play with.

“ What have you got in your frock, my love ?” said the countess.

The little girl looked very archly, but immediately replied—

“ I must tell you the truth, must not I, mamma Glenroy ? because pretty man says its very wicked to tell lies ;” and she held out a beautiful little coral necklace. “ There, who do you think gave me these pretty beads ?”

“ Not Margaret, I should suppose,” said the countess, with evident surprise and curiosity.

“ Who was it, my darling ?” cried count Rosalvie, taking her on his lap.

“ A fine gentleman, with a gold hat on,” said Sophia. “ Hannah and I saw him at Margaret Campbell’s, and I do so love him, mamma Glenroy, because he is so good-natured, and he gathered me such heaps of flowers ; and then we ran about the garden, and Hannah cried sadly ; can you tell me what Hannah cried for mamma Glenroy ?”

The countess had turned as pale as ashes while the little innocent related this story, and the cup of tea which she held in her hand had nearly fallen to the ground, when count Rosalvie suddenly exclaimed—

“ I have a pretty good guess who this gentleman is, Evadne—the grove musician—the chamber ghost—the sighing Montreville.”

But Hannah being immediately called, she explained the whole affair, saying, she had been to drink tea at Duncan Campbell’s, to make Margaret a present of a jar of honey, when she was met at the door of the Falcon Inn by Mr. Montreville, who had, as the child described it, a gold laced hat on, and his coat, which was blue, was ornamented with gold trimmings.

“ I’d venture my life,” cried Sir William, “ but it is the naval uniform.”

“ Yes, my lord, that it is,” said Hannah, “ for he is now called captain Montreville ; and Duncan Campbell tells me he has been in great battles, and the ship that brought him over from the Indies was wrecked near the harbour of Montrose, and all the poor souls perished.

Hannah having communicated all she thought necessary, now left the room, but lady Glenroy was so agi-

tated as to be hardly able to keep her seat ; one moment she ran to the window and opened it, which commanded a distant view of Vine cottage, the next minute she relapsed into a melancholy fit, and appeared thoughtful and perplexed ; but the wary eye of a fond parent traced in her lovely and now beautifully animated countenance the transports of a pure and unconquerable affection, which neither time, circumstances, sickness, sorrow, nor even death itself, had yet the power to obliterate from her memory, and he proposed paying a visit to Duncan and Margaret at the Falcon Inn, and taking by surprise the already softened and subdued heart of Montreville.

“ Oh ! my father ! ” cried the deeply blushing countess, “ indeed, I am unequal to the task of beholding Montreville ; how strange, how inexplicable are my feelings at the present moment ; my heart assures me that I am innocent, and yet I have all the pain, the confusion, the apprehension of having committed error. Heaven knows how willingly I could throw myself at his feet, and implore his pardon, but alas ! I dare not, I should sink with terror.”

Count Rosalvie smiled.

“ You are in love, my dear child, and yours,” cried he, “ is no mockery of the passion ; it is real, and where was ever to be found true love without timidity ? but come, I don’t think you will find your punishment from Montreville a very severe one ; he may probably arrest your liberty.

“ Yes, he will make her a prisoner for life. I have no doubt of it,” observed Sir William.

“ I promised Rhoda that we should dine with her to-day,” said the countess, blushing still deeper at the remark made by Sir William.

“Allons then!” cried Sir William, enjoying her confusion “but mark me, countess, if you attempt to make yourself one atom more lovely than you look at present, your father and I will go and storm the Falcon Inn, and bring away the captain bound in chains, and sighing at your feet.”

The countess, who was now habited in second mourning, certainly did not take more pains at her toilet on this day than usual; but somehow or other she looked ten times more beautiful; and her eyes, what was the matter with them we cannot tell, but her eyes absolutely sparkled.

As Hannah stood at her elbow, she described the fine figure of Montreville, now and then exclaiming—

“Oh! that you could but see him! oh! that he was but here with his gold laced hat on! but I know what I know; we shall have no more sighs nor groans now. I’ll be bound for him there will be no occasion to bring a pair of pistols in his pocket. I warrant we shall be quiet enough now.”

In this way did Hannah continue to amuse her mistress the whole time she was dressing, and when she descended to the drawing-room, her light and elegant figure, the enchanting loveliness of her complexion, and the sweet serenity of her countenance, fascinated the gaze of her doating father, for such had once been his Laura; and yet he acknowledged on this day that the beauty of lady Glenroy would greatly have surpassed even that of her mother.

The phaeton, which they preferred to a close carriage, was now at the door, and Sir William, during the ride to his house, entertained the lovely countess and her father with a thousand humorous anecdotes.

Lady Harman at the first glance of her sweet friend, observed a degree of animation in her countenance which had of late been quite unusual, and she met her with a most enchanting smile, blushing, as she exclaimed in a whisper, "Oh, Rhoda! Montreville is"—

"Is come, I suppose, said lady Harman?"

"No, not absolutely here, my dear friend," answered the countess, "but at the Falcon Inn, with Duncan Campbell. Oh! happy Duncan to shelter such a guest."

In the drawing room of lady Harman was Sir George and lady Courtney, and to the no small surprise of Sir William and lady Glenroy, in one corner of the room, with little George Courtney in her lap, sat the once haughty and forbidding lady Caroline, no longer dashing Jack, but the humble and mortified wife of Mr. Patrick O'Neal, returned to her brother as a bale of goods unfit for sale; in short, her *cara sposa*, having discovered that this peerless virgin had brought him no dowry, save her own sweet person; (lady Caroline was then in her forty-second year) a head crammed with fashionable follies, and a heart as unfeeling as her pockets were empty, contrived one morning to steal a march upon her; and she who had never dropped a tear at the misfortunes of another, was in a shower of tears herself obliged to confess that the barbarous man had abandoned her. On her dressing room table he left a curious epistle, which being short, we shall transcribe for the benefit of the readers.

CARY,—Let this be a warning to you in future not to trust to men's deceitful tongues; and to every poor devil in my pitiful case, who happens to have more

brass in his face than he carries in his pockets. And if you should grieve for the loss of your sweet darling captain Patrick O'Neal, for the love of grace my jewel get another husband as fast as you can. So wishing him success of your big thumping estate and your engaging person, here's good luck to you honey.

I remain, your's no longer,

PATRICK O'NEAL,

Captain of no Regiment at all at all  
in the City of Dublin.

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## CHAPTER XLIII.

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To describe the rage which filled the bosom of the now deserted bride upon reading the contents of this laconic billet doux is impossible; and to seek redress of an Irish fortune hunter (for such in reality was the accomplished captain Patrick O'Neal) was an idea which lady Caroline, wronged as she was, immediately rejected. To return once more to the protecting wing of her brother was her only alternative; yet that brother was, or had been, in distress; and the very sound of poverty was petrifying to the ears of lady Caroline. Then there was another mortifying circumstance: fame had been busy in proclaiming that the countess had found a father, a titled father, in whose protecting arms the object of her hatred was now secure from the shafts of malignant envy. The contemptible little

poetess too was become lady Harman. All this was intolerably provoking; yet she consoled herself with the words of the old proverb, that, "needs must when the devil drives," and instantly despatched a letter, a penitential one, to Courtney Hall, complaining of the cruel treatment of her husband, and throwing herself on the protection of Sir George and lady Courtney; who, in addition to lady Caroline's mortification, was, she had heard, become quite a matronly domestic woman; and that she even refrained from playing cards on the sabbath day. Lady Caroline's letter was immediately answered by Sir George in the following style. But it was a long time before she could bring herself to believe that this was the language of her hitherto gay and volatile brother.

CAROLINE,

If your husband has indeed deserted you my house is still open to receive you; more especially if your penitence is really sincere, and you are, in your own words, an altered woman; and believe me Caroline, there was sufficient room for your improvement.

Since your absence from Courtney Hall, I imagine the papers must have informed you that the ever lovely and amiable countess of Glenroy has providentially found a father; in that father I found a friend, to whose humanity I am indebted for preservation from the jaws of a prison; and through whose liberality I am recovering from involvements; which, permit me to add, owed their source to your wise management and the thoughtless extravagance of my wife. But I thank heaven she is reclaimed, and is so far weaned from her former life, as to be capable of nursing her

own children and to look after her domestic affairs. She wears a handkerchief on her bosom and a cap upon her head. You have now a slight sketch of the present establishment at Courtney Hall; where, if you come, you must not attempt to introduce any new system of government, but prudently conform to the rules of my family. As such you will be always welcome to your

Affectionate brother,

GEORGE FREDERIC COURTNEY.

P. S. You must not expect that I shall again receive under my roof that impertinent mischief-making baggage, your woman, Mrs. Moppet. If you must have an attendant, let her be a quiet homely country girl, simple in her manners, and plain in her dress.—G. C.

Poor lady Caroline was, on this occasion, without one atom of affectation; and actually did shed tears on perusal of this very extraordinary letter; containing proof positive of what she had but slightly heard; and a fit of hysterics, which came upon her soon afterwards, was the natural consequence. To go to her brother, however disagreeable the alternative, was now her only resource; putting the best face upon the matter therefore, she packed up her wardrobe; and in a solitary post-chaise (having been obliged to part with the whole of her equipage and servants) she set out from Clarges Street on her journey to Scotland; where Sir George received her in the manner described; and in a few days she changed her dress according to her circumstances; played with the children; and



became to all appearance an altered woman, that is, as far as an exterior would go ; for lady Caroline was still the same in her heart ; she had not changed one atom of her disposition.

Lady Courtney had produced another little stranger, which was about four months old ; and being a girl, was, in compliment to lady Glenroy, called Evadne. On this subject we shall pronounce but one word, interest ; and that contains a million. Such was the motive which had induced lady Courtney to call her infant daughter Evadne. But lady Courtney was not to blame ; and thousands will be found imitating her example in that experienced academy, the world. Dividing her attentions therefore between the infant Evadne and the little boy George lady Caroline was now constantly employed ; and in order to astonish the folks, she took little George Courtney on her lap in the carriage as they proceeded to lady Harman's, on that day when lady Glenroy and count Rosalvie were expected, whom she saluted in the following manner :

“ Dear creature—monstrous glad to see you—hope your ladyship is extremely well—congratulate you on your happy union with Sir William—said it would be a match—studied Lavater—can tell when people are destined to come together and when they are not.”

I am perfectly aware of your ladyship's foresight and extreme penetration,” said Sir William, with a low bow ; and would have added something more severe, had not lady Harman gently whispered in his ear—

“ My dear love, let us not triumph over a fallen enemy.”

“ Why, that's true, Rhoda ;” replied Sir William,

but I am glad you reminded me, or I certainly should have popped out with something very unpleasant to this lady Caroline, for though we may forgive an insult, by Jove if ever I can forget one."

Considering all things, however, the day glided by with a degree of satisfaction to all parties, and when they rose to depart, no particle of animosity reigned in the breast of Sir William against the mortified lady Caroline, who endeavoured by a total change of conduct, to plant herself in his good graces, and succeeded so well that all retorts were consigned to oblivion, and disagreeable reflections banished.

The countess and her father were now seated in the phæton, and count Rosalvie took the reins, but they had not proceeded more than two miles, when the horses suddenly took fright in sight of a most dreadful precipice; and the grooms, not expecting such a disaster, were too far behind to prevent the horses running at full speed; it was a moment suspended between life and death, and the terrors of count Rosalvie, as he in vain attempted to stop their progress, had arrived to the highest pitch, while the screams of the terrified countess pierced the air. Just then a gentleman on horseback, who was at no great distance, perceiving their danger, rode furiously towards them, and at the peril of his own life preserved theirs. With uncommon management he rushed forwards, and instantly dismounting, forced the heads of the animals into a contrary direction, just then on the verge of the gaping precipice. The grooms now arriving, flew to the assistance of the stranger, who held the horses by an effort of almost

superior strength and skill, while count Rosalvie, in tones of extacy called out—

“Thanks, generous preserver! excellent, courageous young man, I am indebted to you for more than life, the preservation of my child! my Evadne!”

At these words the stranger seemed electrified, for running to the side of the phæton, he gazed for a moment on the form and pale countenance of the countess, and clasping his hands together, exclaimed—

“Your child, said you, Sir? your Evadne? Oh, God! and she was once my Evadne!”

“Montreville!” exclaimed the countess. “Montreville,” echoed count Rosalvie.

“I am Montreville!” uttered their preserver; and the countess fell almost lifeless into his arms.

“Oh! unexpected meeting;” said count Rosalvie, a moment that repays past suffering, and turns our fears to rapture.”

All description must fail to do justice to the pleasing emotions which now pervaded the bosom of the countess, as recovering from insensibility, she found herself encircled by the arms of Montreville, whose countenance bore testimony of an agitated but transported heart. The presence of the servants was, however, a bar to all further conversation; and the countess, declaring she had not courage to venture again into the phæton, count Rosalvie proposed as the best plan that they should instantly despatch one of the grooms back to Sir William’s and return with a carriage to convey them to the castle, while the other would be left to take charge of the horses. This was accordingly done, and Montreville, informing them that he had

passed a cottage within a quarter of a mile from where they then were, he recommended they should conduct the countess thither, and there await the arrival of Sir William's carriage.

"The best plan imaginable," cried count Rosalvie, and the countess leaning on the arm of her beloved Montreville, on their way to the cottage, suffered him to imprint on her hand an ardent kiss of pure unalterable affection.

A pretty Scotch woman in short petticoats, and a mob cap, with a fine infant in her arms, saluted them at the door of the cottage, and gave them entrance to an apartment fitted up in the true Scotch style, containing two or three beds, half a dozen wooden bowls, and a large iron pot full of potatoes was placed on a blazing fire made of peat, which by no means emitted an odour of the pleasantest kind. Count Rosalvie, however, was highly delighted whenever he could take a peep at humble happiness in any shape.

"How many children has God sent you, honest woman," cried he, as he played with the little urchin whom she had now put into a wooden crib before the fire.

"Guid faith, yer'e honour, I've nae less than sax bairnes, and God be thanked, my guid mon wins siller enow to haud us brawly."

She then produced from a cupboard some Highland whiskey and some oat cakes, a small cheese, with some butter and milk, which she placed on the table, and with that smile of good humoured hospitality which is invariably centered in the hearts of the Scotch peasantry, invited her guests to partake of what was contained in this simple fare. Count Rosalvie absolutely did taste

of the whiskey, which being genuine, was excellent ; and the countess and Montreville, not wishing to hurt the feelings of their generous hostess, drank a little of the milk. Count Rosalvie determined to indulge in the overflowings of an excellent, though eccentric, heart, at the moment of their departure thus addressed the pretty Scotch woman—

“ Well, my bonny hostess, what are we to give you for entertaining us in the manner you have done ? ”

With a smile she replied—

“ The de’il a bawbe ye’re honor ! guid faith yer’e heartily welcome to the vary best I hae to gie ye.”

Here ye sons and daughters of luxury ! here proud votaries of wealth, take a lesson from the peasant’s lowly shed, and blush to find the hinges of your gates shut to hospitality !

Count Rosalvie, on receiving a reply so concordant with his own feelings, at the door of the cottage slipped five guineas into the hands of his astonished hostess ; and on her turning round to express her thanks the carriage drove from the door ; her surprise was further encreased on finding in the clenched hands of her infant, as it lay asleep in the crib, a one pound note ; but whether the gift of Montreville or the countess we cannot determine.

It was late when the inhabitants of Glenroy castle retired to rest. The joy and surprise which the arrival of Montreville had occasioned, kept the whole family in a delightful bustle, for it had long been reported in the castle that Montreville had once been the affianced husband of the countess, and looking forward to the period when they imagined he would be wholly so, they treated him with every mark of the most profound respect.

Sleep did not operate so powerfully on the countess as to make her once forget that Montreville, her beloved Montreville, slept under the same roof with her. She arose with renovated spirits, and the fresh rose which bloomed on either cheek was a harbinger of that joy which reigned within; with steps light as the gossamer she tripped down stairs, and was saluted by Montreville in the breakfast parlour, who had been deeply engaged in conversation with count Rosalvio; explanations had taken place on both sides; but when informed of the arts which had been used to compel Evadne to give her hand to the earl, how great were the transports of Montreville, to find that her heart still remained wholly his.

"Are you then mine?" cried he, gazing on her lovely countenance. "Oh! Evadne, were you then true to vows which nothing but my supposed death had power to shake! Dear idol of my heart, forgive that I ever doubted!"

The countess now put into Montreville's hand the letter, which, as she had never seen the hand-writing of Mrs. Montreville, she believed to contain the heart-rending intelligence of his death; but which, continued she, in his dying moments, confessed to have been written by himself. Oh! deception which I too faithfully relied on, what has it not made me suffer?"

"Oh, Evadne!" said Montreville, and what have been my sufferings? what were my emotions on reading the paragraph of your marriage in the public papers? they were such, that but for the recollection of my mother, had nearly reduced me to commit the same rash act as the unhappy earl. I wrote to my mother, who instantly replied that you had been mar-

ried several months, and that report greatly erred if you were not extremely happy in becoming the wife of lord Glenroy. Ignorant of the arts which had been practised to deceive you, she reviled your inconstancy, and commended her prudence in not having permitted me to remain longer exposed to the charms of your seductive society."

"Stationed upon foreign service, it was many years before I returned; and then it was only to witness the rapid decline of my excellent mother. For whatever were my internal sufferings, I permitted no indulgence of them in her presence; and before her decease, she had the satisfaction of believing that I had regained my former tranquillity. The loss of my mother was a severe affliction; for it is well known that, with the feminine softness of her sex, she united a mind vigorous and active; and was indeed, in every sense, a tender mother, an able counsellor, and a sincere friend.

"I still served under the command of admiral Nelson; and soon after the demise of my mother, received orders to join my ship then bound for the Eastern coast. A presentiment that I should never return, urged me to the rash step of journeying into Scotland to snatch a farewell glance of you. The enterprise was hazardous; and the attempt, I well knew, might cost me my life; but all apprehensions vanished in the extatic hope of once more beholding you. Disguising my person as well as I could from all traces of former recollection, when I arrived in Scotland I assumed the habit of a minstrel; and found access into the cottages of some of the mountaineers, who entertained me with kindness and hospitality. I agreed to pay them board and lodging while I remained in that part of the

country; and I continued to wander near the castle; sometimes lying concealed for hours in that beautiful grove in which I imagined that you would often walk. One evening, chance blessed me with a sight of you: you were deeply engaged in conversation with a female. The well-remembered tones of your voice struck deep to my heart; and, regardless of consequences, I was on the point of rushing from my concealment, when, in another part of the grove, I could plainly distinguish the sound of footsteps. I rose precipitately; and as I passed near the spot where you were seated, heard your companion pronounce that, lord Glenroy, was the most amiable of husbands. At that moment a sigh, of indescribable anguish, burst from my full heart"——

"And remained fixt deeply in mine;" said the countess. "Oh, Montreville! how powerful was the impression made in my mind by that sigh!"

Montreville pressed the hand of the countess to his lips and proceeded.

"That same evening I encountered Hannah. I now dreaded a discovery; and was compelled to use threats to frighten her into silence. She poor creature tremblingly obeyed. My time being limited, I resolved to see you once more and then to depart for ever. One day, taking my harp, I repaired to the place of my concealment in the pine grove, and there played some wild and melancholy airs."

"Your most obsequious and very humble servant my invisible musician," exclaimed count Rosalvie, "I believe I was the only listener you had on that day and your performance was excellent."

Montreville smiled and continued,



"You must be aware, at least, I suppose Hannah has informed you, that a second time I was blessed with the sight of you. You remember the little chamber in the east wing of the castle; in a small recess of that apartment I was concealed. My heart throbbed when I saw you approach, leaning upon the arm of your friend; and, Oh! how fascinating was the beauty of your countenance as you gazed on that portrait; how innocent did you likewise look when you pronounced that the object whom it resembled must be incapable of deceit. I groaned inwardly at the supposed deception which you had practised to deceive me. It startled and alarmed you; and Hannah and your friend conveyed you instantly away from the apartment. What now remains to be told is, my sudden encounter with the earl, who entered the cottage of Duncan Campbell on the very day I had proposed to take my departure. Heaven knows I aimed not at his life, nor he I hope at mine."

"Indeed he acknowledged your goodness," said the countess.

"As I instantly quitted him," continued Montreville, "I knew nothing of the dreadful act which he afterwards committed, until the papers furnished me with an account. I confess I felt shocked, although at the extermination of my most mortal foe. A few months previous to this my second return to England, the good old admiral Nelson departed this life; and, as he died without heirs to his property, left me in the possession of a very ample fortune. A strange fluttering seized my heart when I embarked on board the *Hindustan*; which, after a perilous voyage, was wrecked on the Scottish coast. I found myself and a

black boy the only survivors out of five hundred souls. Nearly insensible, I was carried with my faithful attendant to the Falcon Inn; and on my recovery found that, the arms which encircled my exhausted frame were those of Duncan Campbell; in whom I discovered my kind host; and in whose house I have since continued to be an inmate. I now appeared in my true character to Duncan and Margaret; they furnished me with every particular relative to the earl's death, and talked much of your excellent father, count Rosalvie, to whom I shortly intended to make myself known, when my fortunate, my glorious stars, my destiny, marked me out to be his preserver and yours. Oh, Evadne! is not my joy too great for utterance? needs there more words to say how ardently, how sincerely I love you."

"But one word more," exclaimed count Rosalvie, "excellent and most amiable young man! but one word, and being her father, I pronounce it—take her—she is yours; and believe me, Montreville, as I weigh the well tried virtues of your character in one scale, and your unexampled fidelity in the other, I find you alone have been, and alone are worthy to possess the daughter of Rosalvie!

It were vain to paint the expression blended in the features of Montreville as he received this precious gift from the hand of count Rosalvie, and looking in her blushing face, he timidly pronounced—

"And does Evadne come willingly?"

"Oh! can Montreville doubt it?" exclaimed she. Fate once compelled me to give a hand without a heart, but here I joyfully pledge both together, and

with pride acknowledge Montreville to be their sovereign ruler."

It is unnecessary to say whether the lovely hand was received or not, as it was held out for the acceptance of the transported Montreville—for count Rosalvie instantly exclaimed—

"Let Smart ransack the cellar for a dozen bottles of the oldest wine that can be found in the castle of Glenroy. Let the sun shine for once without a cloud, and happiness reign among us without envy."

And did not the sun shine? yes, on the day that blessed the union of Henry and Evadne. An union which had long been protracted by the dark clouds of disappointment, the frowns of envy, and the arm of treachery; but Heaven was at length propitious to their vows offered up to that hallowed shrine which never forsakes its true and faithful votaries.

At the express desire of the lovely countess, the nuptials were solemnized as quietly and privately as possible in the chapel of Glenroy, to avoid all those empty forms of vain and idle pageantry, in which the eye only participates, but the heart has little share.

When Montreville next paid a visit to his friends at Vine cottage, he had actually verified the prediction of the pretty Rachel, and was become "Benedict the married man" to all intents and purposes. And as he presented himself at the door of the cottage with a cordial smile, to the equally cordial glance of Mr. and Mrs. Morrison, he triumphantly led forth his beauteous bride, exclaiming—

"Dear Mrs. Morrison I have brought you an unexpected guest this morning, who is exceedingly anxious

to have the pleasure of being introduced to you and your worthy husband."

Rachel, who was seated at her little work table, and who had never seen the countess but in a mourning habit, and whose lovely features were now modestly veiled, instantly sprang to salute and welcome, as she imagined, a beautiful stranger. But what was her surprise and evident astonishment, when this veil was gracefully removed by the hands of Captain Montreville, and she involuntarily uttered—

"Oh! my heavens! it is the countess of Glenroy."

"You are mistaken, my dear Rachel," instantly replied the happy and transported Montreville. "The lady whom you now see before you is no longer lady Glenroy. She has another title, and has given me one—the most blessed, the most enviable in existence."

"And what is that?" demanded Rachel.

"Husband!" exclaimed Montreville.

All further explanation was rendered wholly unnecessary. Rachel, Morrison, and lastly Adolphus were now successively introduced to the warm and cordial smiles of the lovely bride; and the happy party, after two hours of uninterrupted, cheerful, and social converse, returned, at the express invitation of the amiable pair, to partake of an elegant dinner, and share in the hymeneal festivities at the castle of Glenroy.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

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Pride, which is the characteristic folly of paltry great ones, at the same time that it is the never-failing mark of illiberal, prejudiced, and unfeeling hearts, had never been a feature in the disposition, character, or manners, of the truly amiable and lovely countess of Glenroy. She had never appreciated those high gifts of fortune beyond their intrinsic value; having duly considered that they were never designed by the wise disposer of all earthly dispensations to raise such eager attachment and such immoderate anxiety; well assured that they were given for our occasional refreshment, not for our chief felicity: never, therefore, had lady Glenroy set an excessive value upon objects which were intended only for her secondary regard. She treated Mr. and Mrs. Morrison and Adolphus as her equals and friends, and with that unvaried sweetness of manners and engaging affability which rendered her so truly fascinating; the idol of her husband, and the blessing of all those who had the happiness of her society.

Rachel indeed, at her first introduction to the bride of Montreville, had evinced no small degree of embarrassment; nor was Leonard Morrison himself under a less appearance of restraint; seldom out of his father's counting-house, he had but few opportunities of mixing in the society of personages of exalted rank and fashion; and but still less inclination to become one of its votaries. In humble happiness the sole views

and wishes of Leonard Morrison were concentrated ; and he followed nature, rather than submit to the false blandishments of art (whatever might have been the intended plan of his father), in the choice of a wife also. Attracted by the simplicity and beauty of Rachel Summerville, whose loveliness was set off by one of the sweetest and most ingenuous dispositions in the world, Leonard forgot to enquire into the expectancy of Rachel's affairs ; or whether, if he married her, she was to bring a dowry with her. No such thought had once intruded itself on the mind of Leonard Morrison before the knot had been tied ; it was not likely, therefore, to become a subject of much serious contemplation afterwards, well knowing that on one side at least there was provision enough to compensate amply for any want of it on the other.

In a few successive weeks, however, passed under the roof of the bridal pair, the natural reserve of all parties insensibly diminished, and the manners of the pretty Rachel received no inconsiderable improvement in the accomplished society to which she was constantly in the habit of being introduced in the castle of Glenroy ; which was alternately mixed with that also at Courtney Hall and the splendid mansion of Sir William Harmer, from whom the three friends had received the most pressing invitations, and of which they had several times availed themselves.

Adolphus, indeed, had more frequently become the guest of captain Montreville and his charming bride, count Rosalvie having been pleased to pass some warm encomiums on the merits of his young favourite (as he generally styled Adolphus) ; he was seldom absent a day together, and whenever that happened to be the

case, the count was always sure to pay a visit at Vine cottage, late in the evening, to enquire after their Orphan Boy, and to learn what accident had detained him from passing the day at Glenroy. Nor did this marked preference to the society of their young friend create any jealousy, or excite any painful emotion, in the generous hearts of Leonard and Rachel; they were on the contrary rejoiced at the influence he had obtained in the castle; well aware of the striking advantages which Adolphus so eminently possessed from the liberal education which he had received when under the protection of his uncle, Sir Mildred Austincourt, and that he was, both in mental endowments and graceful accomplishments, a very desirable companion for count Rosalvie and the polished society of the exalted personages of rank and fashion which was every day to be seen at the magnificent table of the lovely countess. There was another circumstance in addition to the many amiable qualifications which exhibited themselves in the character of Adolphus, which rendered him doubly interesting to the generous and susceptible hearts of his newly acquired friends, and that was the peculiarity of his situation as an Orphan Boy, left in a manner wholly destitute, and driven by blind prejudice and affected notions of honour from the only earthly protector or relative whom death had not dissolved. His uncle, Sir Mildred Austincourt, who had utterly abandoned a virtuous youth, merely because he morally kept an oath he was bound to hold sacred, had turned that youth, in his orphan state, on a wild and merciless world, at the same instant that a perfect conviction of who the seducer of Fanny Roseberry was, must have been ever

present to his mind in the person of his own son, of whose guilt no doubt could have remained ; and the conduct of Sir Mildred was severely reprobated by count Rosalvie. There was besides in the fine countenance of Adolphus an expression of such ingenuous and modest sweetness, and a look of innocence so beautifully portrayed, as he related his affecting story from the period that he quitted Austincourt Priory with his little dumb but faithful companion, Sambo, under his arm, to that moment he had entered the hospitable abode of Mrs. Morrison, at St. Alban's, that the truths which he thus uttered, flowing spontaneously and feelingly from an agitated heart, appeared to count Rosalvie "confirmation strong as proofs from holy writ." It would have been a difficult matter to have turned the scale, which in the minds of all present had already weighed the balance in favour of the entire innocence of the poor wronged Orphan Boy ! It was not to be supposed, however, that, although Adolphus passed his life in one unvarying scene of tranquillity and rational happiness with his amiable friends, he was indifferent to the fate of the Austincourt family ; and strange to say, though a variety of letters had passed between Leonard and his father, yet he could not gain the smallest intelligence from Mr. Morrison respecting any of his relatives ; till after a period nearly of twelve months, the old gentleman, in his accustomed humourous and facetious style, thus commenced a letter to Leonard, informing him of the following events which had taken place at Austincourt Priory :—

"Tell Adolphus Walsingham," said he, "that in compliance with his earnest solicitation I went a step



beyond my inclination, and more than two steps beyond my capacity to serve him. I actually hired a post-chaise, and your sister Mary being rather poorly, I took her with me for the benefit of the journey. But where do you suppose I journeyed to? Why not to the Blue Mountains, where you was going to, if the winds had not kindly blown you on the Scottish coast, to be swallowed up alive, wholesale and retail, for the benefit of the blackamoors. No! I had other fish to fry. I desired the postillion to drive to Austincourt Priory, and when I arrived, boldly demanded an audience of Sir Mildred Austincourt, which was not so easy to be done as said, for the porter actually denied me admittance; but I so rated him, that curse me, if ever he will lose sight of good manners again as long as he can remember old Led Morrison, tea dealer and grocer. No admittance—cannot possibly let me in—and go about my business or call again to-morrow. Why curse your impudence, cried I, tell an honest tradesman, who has come forty miles in a post-chaise, and all at his own expence, to go about his business; why you lazy, fat, greazy, lubberly, kennel bound! I have left my business and come all this way to speak to your master, and speak to him I will—or by the Lord Harry I will soon let you know what o'clock it is. Here's manners! here's good-breeding at the house of an English baronet! By the Lord the nation may well go to pot when such fellows as you, who are fed by it, are suffered to kick civility out of doors! So saying, I handed Mary from the chaise, and without ceremony advanced into the middle of a hall large enough to have turned a coach and six horses, and there to my surprise sat three more fel-

lows all drest out in green and gold with gingerbread buttons, and stinking of perfume like so many pole cats.

“ ‘Come, come,’ cried I, ‘I shall stand no more of your nonsense: either go up to your master and inform him that a person waits on him with particular business, or I shall go myself.’

“ ‘On this they all scouted one and all like so many hares; but I waited longer than I could have served twenty customers before I was desired to walk up stairs, which I did in no very good humour; for the lazy rascals had ruffled my temper. I knocked at the door, because I thought, if a baronet did not know what good manners were, that his inferiors would teach him. But I soon got the better of my ill-humour when I saw one of the finest old gentlemen my eyes ever beheld with a pleasing and benevolent countenance advance to meet me.

“ ‘Mr. Morrison, I presume,’ cried he, ‘and the young lady—but pray have the goodness to be seated.’

“ ‘My daughter:’ answered I, ‘we have both pressed in rudely here Sir Mildred; but I am a plain man of dealing, quite unaccustomed to the ceremony and forms that attend a great man like you; therefore hope you will excuse me.’

“ ‘Sir,’ cried he, with a most placid smile, ‘I am as plain a man as yourself, and as little fond of ceremony; and what may appear more strange to you, am, at this moment, as unacquainted with great men, as you are pleased to call them, as yourself. I live in retirement as you perceive, disgusted with the follies, and despising the customs of that world, which sources of domestic affliction have rendered hateful to me.’

“ On this the old gentleman wiped off a tear that started from his eyes; and without enquiring into my business, he rang the bell to desire that some refreshment might immediately be brought in, which he very politely pressed Mary and myself to accept of. Ah! ah! though I, this will do vastly;—this is something in the shape of old English hospitality. But what a pity that the servants of so good a man should, by their insolent mode of behaviour, give a stranger an unfavorable impression of his character. When Mary and myself had drank off a glass of wine a piece, I thought it was time to open my business; and should have done so, had not the silly girl, on casting her eyes over the chimney board, and seeing a full length portrait of a certain person, gave a loud scream, which as you may suppose, entirely put every thing I had to say out of my head.

“ ‘ My God, young lady!’ exclaimed Sir Mildred, ‘ what can thus alarm you:’ but his eyes following in the same direction as hers, the meaning was plain enough; and more plain than I either wished or expected, I can assure you Led. But no matter: let’s on to business.

“ ‘ Surely,’ continued the baronet, ‘ you have no knowledge of the person that portrait represents?’

“ ‘ Indeed but she has though,’ cried I, ‘ and a better youth does not exist, let the other be where he will, than in the person of Adolphus Walsingham.’

“ On these words Sir Mildred rose from his chair almost in a delirium of joy; and folding his hands together, with an emotion I shall never forget, exclaimed—

“ ‘ Gracious heaven, I thank thee!—Oh worthy sir!

Oh, excellent young lady! ease the throbbings of an old man's heart, and tell me all you know of Adolphus Walsingham!—does he live?—is he well?—is he happy?—and, Oh! more than all, I wish to ask, shall these old eyes ever again behold him?

“ I was so affected with these words I led that, though I am not much given to crying, yet I found myself on the point of being in a melting mood; so I up and told Sir Mildred all I could pick and scrape about his nephew; at which he expressed so much delight and satisfaction, that I thought he never would have done acknowledging how greatly he was obliged to me.

“ ‘ Mr. Morrison,’ cried he, ‘ after what you have related, I am neither willing to part with you nor your fair daughter on so short an acquaintance: and if you are not pressed for time, must positively insist on making you prisoners for a few days at Austincourt Priory; having communications to offer, which, I hope, will be as conducive to the happiness, as well as advantageous to the welfare of my dear nephew, who has been for several months the legal heir to the whole property, a few legacies excepted, of Camilla Grandison. The uncertain probability that the dear boy would ever be found again, or that he might no longer be living, has caused the property, in either case to descend to my youngest son, Edmund Austincourt; who has been some time united to a most amiable and accomplished young lady, the youngest daughter of Sir Robert Montgomery; with whom he lives in as perfect a state of conjugal felicity as few married lives afford.’

“ ‘ In the present times, you mean to say Sir Mildred;’

forty years ago I had no care in the world but to get children; and now I have got them, all my care is how to provide for them,'

"You know Leddy I never like to lose a joke if I can help it. Sir Mildred smiled; and turning round to your sister Mary, paid her a compliment, that made the poor girl blush like a rose in full bloom. But to proceed to business; for I have still a long story to tell you before I conclude this epistle.

"All this while you must know I kept tweedling about my fingers and thumbs in a very awkward manner, as Mary afterwards told me, because I wanted to ask a question, and that was, whether that she-devil lady Austincourt was yet on the stocks or no; and what was become of her precious cub Frederic; or if the poor girl whom he so infamously betrayed was ever yet heard of. All which questions Sir Mildred was kind enough to take off my hands by relating the following circumstances:—

"‘I am now a widower Miss Morrison,’ uttered he, addressing Mary, therefore if you will condescend to grace a bachelor’s table to day, I may probably introduce you to the society of a female companion tomorrow in my sweet and lovely neighbour lady Theodora Percy: that is, if we can draw the fair recluse from her little cottage on the wild heath; where she has resided ever since the death of lady Austincourt and the marriage of my son Frederic.’

"‘You have both your sons married then Sir Mildred,’ cried I, ‘and your daughters’——

"‘Will continue maids as long as they live!’ answered the baronet, ‘and old maids, I promise you: which, to do them justice, has been more the fault of

their mother than their own. Lady Austincourt bred them in the school of fashionable indolence, and taught them to expect to marry peers of the realm; but no peers of the realm having thought it convenient to marry them, poor Georgina and Maryanne may wear the willow for the remainder of their days. They are still so cursedly fond of fashion, however, that they reside with their brother in the purlieus of St. James's; who has married a thoughtless giddy girl, dissipated like himself, and by far more calculated to be his mistress than his wife; and whom I strongly suspect will shortly involve him both in ruin and disgrace. Poor Fanny Roseberry!' continued Sir Mildred with a sigh; 'but I will forbear conversing on so painful a subject. Suffice it to say that, my son Frederic, married to please himself; in which, he did not think it a necessary duty even to consult his father. I shall not again discuss a theme so unpleasant to my feelings, particularly, as not even my most earnest entreaties ever could prevail with him to do justice to his cousin by acknowledging that unfortunate affair with Fanny. For my own part I am fully convinced who the seducer is and who is not.'

"Now Led I suppose I was guilty of a little bit of indecorum; but you must attribute it all to the love and good will I bear to that poor wronged boy; for in my plain blunt way I immediately exclaimed—

" 'And it was a very great pity Sir Mildred, that you was not fully convinced of this consciousness of your nephew's innocence before you so unfeelingly turned him on the wide world.'

"Do not reproach me Mr. Morrison, answered he, with a look at once so mild and penetrating that, in

truth Led, I was sorry I had gone so far ; ‘for my own heart has sufficiently done that already. Yes sir, I was long indeed convinced that the son, and not the nephew, was the transgressor ; though passion blinded me at the time ; and the artifice of a deceitful woman, (for such lady Austincourt confessedly was) but too well succeeded in those arts, in persuading me to adopt measures, and charging Adolphus with a crime, of which I need no conviction than my own heart, that he never was guilty. Fanny herself, were she but here, would most gladly attest his innocence.’

“ ‘ But till that moment fortunately arrives,’ said I, ‘ I fear your nephew is so scrupulously delicate, that he will never be prevailed on to face your presence.’

“ ‘ Then I shall die without blessing him,’ exclaimed Sir Mildred greatly affected, ‘ he shall, he must come to close the eyes of his poor heart-broken uncle : will he not, think you, Mr. Morrison ?’

“ ‘ Doubtless :’ I replied ; which was but right you know Leddy.

“ ‘ Then I will write to him to-morrow ;’ cried the old gentleman, ‘ nay more, I will get a fair hand to add her signature to mine in requesting that he will immediately come over to England and possess himself of that property, which now, no longer had a right to be withheld from him. Yes, Theodora shall be the olive branch between us, Theodora whom no mortal can resist, and least of all, I think, my nephew ; she is an heiress of one hundred thousand pounds Mr. Morrison ; her father, lord Algernon Percy, is lately dead, and the whole of this immense property is left entirely at her own disposal.’

“ ‘ An exceeding snug thing upon my soul !’ cried I,

‘an hundred thousand pounds! What can a young woman do with so much money?’

“What few young women ever think of I believe;” answered Sir Mildred, ‘she gives it, Mr. Morrison, to relieve the wants of others; and lives in secluded retirement, while she publicly bestows the most liberal donations to save a sinking multitude. Now I will prevail on this angel to write to Adolphus, and who knows’——

“‘Dinner is on table sir:’ said a fellow thrusting in his head, which was white as a cauliflower, at the door; and I could not help making a remark that did not in the least offend the baronet, though it was one of his own servants; but, on the contrary, seemed to afford him some amusement as we went down stairs; which remark was Led, that if the farmers kept up the high price of corn as they did formerly, and the millers that of flour, I should not be the least surprised, when so many livery servants made use of it as a powder for garnishing their nobs.”

With a few more equally trite observations Mr. Morrison closed his long epistle to his son; and, by way of a postscript, a lecture to the pretty runaway Rachel, which brought a few tears into her lovely eyes; but which were almost immediately kissed off by her fond husband with,—

“What Rachel! cannot you bear a little raillery from my poor old father?”

‘To which, with a smile of the most enchanting sweetness, she replied,—

“Oh! it is not your father’s raillery which, at this moment excites my emotion; it is his goodness in acknowledging me for his daughter when my affection



for his son, carried me so much beyond the bounds which prudence prescribes :—suppose you had not married me Leonard ?”

“ Then should I have proved myself the basest scoundrel in existence ;” warmly repeated Leonard.

“ But there are many such Leonard ;” retorted Rachel.

“ I will not deny the assertion my dearest love ;” answered he, “ but I trust there are not many who do not meet with the punishment they deserve. The desertion of helpless woman, whose generous and affectionate heart has been wrested from its snowy mansion with the sacrifice of many an anguished sigh and many a bitter tear, is a crime, aggravated by cruelty, so odious in the character of man, as ranks him considerably below the brute creation ; nor do I look upon him any longer as the image of his maker.”

“ Moralizing !” exclaimed Adolphus, as at that moment he gaily entered the room ; and Leonard immediately put his father’s letter in the hands of his friend.

“ There,” cried Leonard, “ is some intelligence from old dad ; which, I am happy to say, will at last give you some satisfaction ; and when you have clearly comprehended its contents, I have no doubt Mr. Walsingham, but you will be in a moralizing humour too ;” cried Rachel very archly. Marriages and deaths are serious contemplations.”

“ Inhuman Rachel ! why have you coupled them together !” cried Adolphus with a much graver air than when he first joined his friends ; and taking the letter of old Mr. Morrison to the window, sat down most attentively to peruse its contents ; while every pulse

beat with the swelling tide of expectation ; and hope, on which he had so oft reposed his care-worn thoughts and wishes, presented herself at last, to crown him with a never-fading garland of hurtless flowers ; whose thorns could not offend or destroy the fond illusion. In short, Adolphus had no sooner got to the name of lady Theodora Percy, than there his trembling hand refused its office ; his eyes swam in tears ; his fine complexion glowed with bright and crimson hues ; and, in a voice agitated and tremulous, he intreated Leonard Morrison to finish the contents of his father's welcome epistle.

“ Certainly : ” cried Leonard, “ old dad has spared neither pen, ink, nor paper. Here's lots of news ! Come, in the first place, lady Austincourt, your dearly beloved aunt, is no more : and your dearly beloved cousin Frederic, he is married : so is Edmund : and —and— —and— —what is this ? What a confounded roundabout L old dad has made : do but look Rachel.”

“ Nonsense Leonard : I am sure it is plain enough ; ” cried Rachel, almost stifled with laughing, as she peeped over her husband's shoulder, at the embarrassment and confusion which poor Adolphus now exhibited before them, “ a child might read it without spelling. Come, I will assist you—‘ lady Theodora Percy ’—there it is as plain as can be written : is it not Mr. Walsingham ? ”—And thrusting the letter into the hands of the now heartily abashed and confused Adolphus, Rachel gently putting her arm into that of her husband, they stole out of the room ; leaving their surprised and agitated young friend to commune with his own thoughts, and at liberty to indulge in the full measure of his pleasing reflections.

## CHAPTER XLV.

The mariner when secure from the danger of the ocean reviews the land which gave him birth with tenfold pleasure, and counts each moment till he shall again behold it an age of pain. Such were the hopes, such the wishes, and such the expectations of the Orphan Boy on perusing and re-perusing the contents of Mr. Morrison's thrice welcome letter; not only on account of its intelligence, but from the warm breathing sentiments which it conveyed. To find himself master of a fortune, he so little expected, from the goodness and generosity of Miss Grandison, excited the deepest sense of gratitude; nor could he sufficiently express his obligations to Mr. Morrison; which bound him in ties the most sacred to himself and son.

"Dear Leonard!" cried he, "while tears, which he could no longer restrain, gushed from his eyes, "dear Leonard! to you and your excellent father am I indebted for the good fortune which now attends me. Had your doors been closed against me in the hour of distress when I first came under your hospitable roof, slandered by my enemies and unprotected by those relations who should have befriended me, what, at this moment, would have been the fate of Adolphus Walsingham!"

On this Mrs. Morrison, who was making breakfast, opened her rose-bud lips with a sweet smile, and laying her hand on the shoulder of Adolphus,—

"Come Walsingham," said she, "a truce to all

sombre reflections. If you wish to inspire melancholy, let us take another trip to sea with captain Parker; who, by the by, is this evening coming to take his farewell visit. The *Felix* sails to-morrow morning; and may every success crown the voyage of this excellent and worthy man. But for my part I am now so rejoiced, that I protest I will not hear any thing that inclines me to be serious for a month to come."

"In a month to come," said Leonard, "my sweetest Rachel, you must prepare for a voyage to England: what say you my love to another specimen of your abilities in the character of little Ben the sailor boy?"

"Had I the same object in pursuit I would again venture on so hazardous an undertaking;" replied she, "but at present my character is decidedly fixed."

"Ultimately so, charming Rachel:" cried Adolphus, "and may that character never change: it never can. Faithful love binds a rosy wreath around the head even of hoary time; the influence of which may fade its bloom, but never destroys its fragrance."

"I shall give you one of my best courtesies for that pretty speech some other time;" said Mrs. Morrison, "but really Walsingham, though you are everlastingly talking of love, I do not suppose that the little blind boy has much to answer for on your account, or I think the rich Miss Creggy the merchant's daughter, who is certainly a very fine girl, and has set her cap at you lately so pointedly, even at the very last assembly, would have made some impression on your insensate heart."

"Madam," cried Adolphus, had the lady you have mentioned the charms of a Medecian Venus I have a coat of mail which would effectually shield me from their brilliancy."

“ Indeed !” said Mrs. Morrison with an arch smile ;  
“ and what sort of coat of mail may that be sir ?”

“ A faithful heart anadam,” answered Adolphus,  
“ already devotedly in the possession of another.”

“ I am satisfied :” cried Mrs. Morrison, on perceiving an expression of surprise, and even disappointment, depicted in the countenance of Leonard, “ I shall ask no more questions ; but woman’s curiosity you know :— you remember Blue-Beard. Mercy on us ! my dear Led, how grave you look ! Come smile ! I hate to see you look grave. One would almost imagine that you thought Walsingham had fallen in love with your wife !”

Leonard, on this rally of his lively Rachel, recovered his spirits ; but not without softly whispering, as he sat close at her elbow,—

“ Poor Mary, it is all over with you.”

Rachel having occasion to leave the room, Adolphus anxiously enquired after the health of both his sisters ; at which he replied,—

“ Harriet has her usual health and spirits ; but Mary, poor Mary, my father informs me, is, he apprehends, in the first stage of a consumption : and my mother is inconsolable at the change which has so recently taken place in her disposition. She is a dear lovely amiable girl, and next to my own Rachel, dearest to my heart is my sister Mary. I once thought—— I——I——I once wished—— No matter what I wished : it is all over with poor Mary ; and so there is an end of the business.”

Shocked and surprised by a communication he so little expected, Adolphus experienced a thousand indescribable pangs : and felt for Mary Morrison all that a man could feel in his peculiar situation. His

unbounded obligation to the father of the lovely Mary—his affection for Leonard whom he loved as his brother—and divested of all this, his admiration of the gentle virtues of Mary Morrison herself—all tended to one point; that of making her an offer of his hand; although he felt convinced he should resign every hope of earthly happiness, the renunciation of his long cherished, strong, secret, though ardent, love for lady Theodora Percy. But honor and a grateful sense of kindness and benefits received from the Morrison family were too inherent in the disposition of our Orphan Boy to be easily eradicated; and these just and exalted sentiments so well appreciated would never suffer him to yield for a moment to any selfish considerations of his own interest or personal gratification. But candour being a brief point in a case like this, Adolphus instantly disclosed the nature of his feelings to Leonard, and concluded by declaring that, after what he had informed him, if he thought his hand worthy of the acceptance of his sister that hand was hers.

“And have these been the reflections of my friend since yesterday evening?” inquired Leonard, gazing with increased satisfaction and admiration on the fine ingenuous and expressive countenance of Adolphus, who instantly replied,—

“A man of honor should do nothing unworthy of himself however removed from the eyes of the world, and with no other witness but himself of his own actions. I have reflected on the merits of the lovely Mary, and lament indeed that I have no heart to bestow on an object every way so worthy of the tenderest attachment; candour, honor, obliges me to

make this confession ; but I have still a hand, a fortune, at my disposal :—they are Mary's. I beseech you Leonard to offer them to the lovely girl, and spare her delicacy and feelings from experiencing any further uneasiness on my account."

Leonard Morrison was wholly overcome. He grasped the hand of his generous young friend. For a few moments he was unable to recover himself, and burst into tears ; while at length he articulated,—

"What! save my sister and sacrifice my friend! No, Walsingham ; this is a point on which man must speak for man : and I candidly confess that, I would not have given up my Rachel to have saved a thousand sisters. No, Walsingham, friendship does not require such a sacrifice ; they are unnatural, and good can never result from such. Yet do I applaud, do I admire, the noble generosity of your character. It is the more praiseworthy in these degenerate times, when we see men in every station of life calculating on interest, ambition, and avarice. Here is my hand ; take it. The unexampled proof you have given of self-denial for the happiness of a whole family demands a brother's thanks, and more than ever binds you to my heart."

Here ended the foregoing conversation between Leonard and Adolphus ; and from this day the subject never was resumed. Adolphus had done his duty ; but notwithstanding which, his mind was agitated and discomposed. He was impatient for the arrival of his uncle's mandate which was to recall him to his native shores. To sum up the whole in one word, he longed to behold lady Theodora ; to throw himself at her feet ; declare his unalterable attachment to her ; and to know

from that lovely creature herself whether hé had ever possessed a place in her affections.

Meanwhile, it had long been the intention of Leonard Morrison to visit his paternal home; though certainly never finally to desert Scotland; much less those generous and amiable friends whose liberal support and kind recommendation, had, with the assistance of his own personal exertions and active industry proved the means of his amassing a very considerable sum; which, with the expectations he had from his father, who had now retired from business, promised him with a prospect of increasing good fortune for the remainder of his days with his beloved and lovely Rachel, now on the eve of presenting her fond husband with the first pledge of their affection. This event was looked forward to with much anxiety and tender apprehension by Leonard; while the lively Rachel cheered with her smiles any little despondency exhibited by her husband.

In a few weeks after this greatly anticipated and important event had taken place at Vine Cottage, preparations were to be made for their return to England, to the no small regret of the lovely countess of Glenroy, who greatly admired the sweet simplicity and unaffected ingenuousness of Rachel's character; nor was count Rosalvie less grieved at the prospect of a separation from his amiable young favourite the Orphan Boy.

Though all were rejoiced on the acquisition of his good fortune, and the pleasing expectations which awaited him, the countess with a sweet smile would, however, while expressing her regrets with those of count Rosalvie and captain Montreville at the approaching departure of their young companions, exclaim with the most touching and beautiful expression:



“What selfish creatures we all are; we are lamenting the departure of our young companions and friends, though assured that if they remained longer in Scotland it would be a source of great disappointment, nay, of affliction probably, to those far distant objects by whom they were so deservedly beloved and respected. Sir Mildred Austincourt, your worthy uncle, for instance, Mr. Walsingham, will most anxiously anticipate the happiness of beholding you.”

Captain Montreville smiled, imagining that he could perceive on the flushed countenance of Adolphus a disappointed feeling that no mention was made of any one else beside his uncle who would be glad to hail and welcome his return to England, and determined that he would be fully gratified in this particular, he exclaimed—

“Evadne, your memory is treacherous, my dear love.”

To which the countess with some surprise replied—

“How Henry?”

The captain immediately answered—

“Because, my dear, you have left out a very particular and distinguished personage in the list of Mr. Walsingham’s most attached friends.”

“A very fair one too, I should imagine,” cried count Rosalvie.

“And though last, not least loved, I should suspect,” cried the captain, “lady Theodora Percy is a very pretty name, is not it, Mr. Walsingham?”

The cheeks of Adolphus now flushed a deeper red; his heart palpitated at the mention of this dear, this favourite, this beloved, and to him sacred name; and the evident embarrassment he betrayed excited a little

pleasant raillery towards him, in which the lovely countess bore the smallest part; occasionally reminding her husband with one of her enchanting smiles, that he had forgotten the time when the little blind boy had been as mischievous and played as many pranks with him.

On this remark the captain very gallantly replied—

“ True my angel, I always endeavour to forget when the urchin was encumbered with thorns; but now that he sleeps secure on balmy roses, would you yet have me remember? No, dearest Evadne, I cannot do that; while I joyously pronounce to all my surrounding friends, look on me, I am Benedict, not only the Married, but the Happy Man.”

A compliment is doubly valued by the manner in which it is pronounced; as gifts are always more precious by the esteem in which they are bestowed. So was that rendered now doubly welcome to the beautiful countess, when conscious that affection alone dictated it from the lips of her adoring husband.

The ensuing morning was destined to behold that which occasioned the most joyful congratulation to their young friend Adolphus—the so much expected and pleasing mandate having at length arrived from Austincourt Priory to re-call him once more to the paternal roof of his uncle: that roof he had quitted under auspices the most gloomy and unfavorable, and with prospects the most cheerless;—that roof from which he had been exiled by the stern commands of the relative he most loved, and the protector of his youthful days—he was now about to return to, with the forgiveness and blessing of that dear relative, and accompanied with fortune's fairest smiles. But the

Orphan Boy had yet another blessing to be the companion of his voyage to his native land, and one of which he was more proud than any, an unsullied heart; unspotted integrity; and the unshaken principles of a just and honest man. These Adolphus thought far superior to any acquisition which fortune had bestowed. This, and this only was the leading star which lighted him to the land of his fathers; and which made the "bosom's lord" sit easy on its throne. He had fortunately reaped the harvest of all his industry; and the TEST OF INNOCENCE was his own.

The letter he had received from the Priory was written in a hand he had never seen before; and the heart of Adolphus fluttered as he broke the seal: the contents ran thus—

"Adolphus Walsingham is earnestly intreated, and affectionately implored, by the commands of a fond uncle, to return to his native country. That uncle is now confined by indisposition to a sick bed, and languishes to behold his nephew. If this consideration has no avail, the writer informs Mr. Walsingham, that the property of the deceased Miss Camilla Grandison, has, by that lady's last will and testament, become his. He is therefore strictly enjoined, on the receipt of this letter, speedily to forward the wishes of Sir Mildred Austincourt by presenting himself as the lawful and acknowledged heir of all such property bequeathed to him; and to hasten to the arms of an affectionate uncle who is impatient to behold him."

No signature being signed to this, although written in an elegant female hand, Adolphus concluded it to be the hand-writing of lady Theodora; and from that moment he made such arrangements in his little mer-

cantile affairs, as to be ready to depart with Mr. and Mrs. Morrison at the earliest opportunity ; which was accordingly effected in the course of nine weeks. During that period, Rachel presented to the arms of her enraptured husband a fine little boy ; which was christened by the names of Henry Rosalvie at the united request of the count and captain Montreville ; the lovely countess herself condescending, to the unspeakable delight of Mrs. Morrison, to become god-mother to the little stranger.

A most affecting separation took place between Evadne and Rachel after promising that a regular correspondence should be established between them. Nor were the adieus less ardent or sincere on the part of the male friends than those of the softer sex. The tears of the grateful Orphan Boy and Leonard Morrison fell on the hands of their benefactors as they jumped into the boat which was to convey them to the ship that was destined to transport them from that friendly and hospitable land, in which they had so long been protected and blest with the warm smiles of Scottish benevolence. Nor did Rachel once again lose sight of her native country without shedding a torrent of tears. The lovely countess waving her snowy hand as they caught a last glimpse of her light and elegant figure as she reclined pensively on the arm of the brave and generous Montreville, while her veteran father loudly and affectionately responded the friendly adieus, were objects not easily to be forgotten in the memory of the three friends ; and when Duncan Campbell, who had accompanied them on board the vessel, came in his turn to bid them farewell, Adolphus and Leonard felt the full force of genuine sensibility, even though coarsely or vulgarly expressed.—

"God be wi ye," exclaimed Duncan as he wrung the hand of Mrs. Morrison with peculiar energy, and may the bonnie bairne ye hae gotten i' the land o' the bannocks and barley meal nae be the last ye sall get when ye come o'er the tweed again. There's nae luck about the house when there's nae bairnes ye ken. Ye'll mind that when ye'll be mony a mile distant fra Duncan Campbell."

With these words Duncan again repeated a Scotchman's blessing, "god be wi ye," departed. The travellers now set sail for the shores of Albion; experiencing no difficulties on the progress of their voyage but the incessant calms which prolonged it. At length arriving in the Thames they yielded to the pleasing impressions of beholding old friends but not with new faces. Leonard could not help thinking of old dad, his sisters, and of his mother on whom he doated; and Adolphus thought of his uncle and the divine lady Theodora Percy. Neither had he forgotten his cousin Edmund Austincourt, whom he still affectionately loved, and was impatient and anxious to embrace and congratulate on his union with the lovely Julia Montgomery. As to Rachel, she was now a mother, and actually had no thought but for her infant boy little Rosalvie: who, nestled in her arms, slept in happy unconsciousness, even of the care which was bestowed on him by his fond and lovely mother.

When they left the ship, Adolphus consulted with Leonard what plan he should adopt.

"Shall I," said he, "instantly depart for Austincourt Priory, or accompany you down to St. Alban's?"

To which Leonard immediately replied,—

"I am aware of your delicacy my dear friend, and respect it, but my father will never forgive me if I do

not take you home for a day or two at least, that I am pretty certain of; and I know you would not like to offend my father."

"Offend your father!" exclaimed Adolphus, "No, Leonard, you have guessed rightly; I would perish sooner than intentionally wound the feelings of my benefactor."

"Nay Dolphy," cried Leonard, you have taken it in too serious a light; I do not believe you would do either. I well know that you was thinking of"——

"Your sister Mary," quickly answered Adolphus, "I would not willingly give that dear girl pain if I could in any degree avoid it."

"She must e'en weather out the storm;" cried Leonard, "but I have little fear. Mary is a sensible prudent girl; and her mind superior to most women will reason with itself. To cherish a hopeless passion which can never meet with return would be folly indeed. Besides, you will soon be the husband of lady Theodora and then"——

"I the husband of lady Theodora!" cried Adolphus, transported at the thought, Leonard do not talk so madly; lady Theodora will never unite herself with me."

"Then she will lead apes in a certain place that shall be nameless;" replied Leonard laughing most heartily at the suggestion, "and I am of opinion that the arms of a fine handsome young fellow like you would be a devilish deal more preferable; and so I dare say will her ladyship think, take my word for it."

The luggage being disposed of in the post chaise, they drove off full speed from the city of London, and arrived at St. Alban's late in the evening, when the

meeting between Leonard and his family may be better imagined than described. His beloved Rachel was also received with such marks of affection, as made the eyes of this charming woman overflow with genuine sensibility. As to the little Henry Rosalvie, he was almost devoured with kisses by his grandfather and grandmother: the former however bluntly declaring that he did not like the name of Rosalvie or Henry half so well as his own,—

“But it is no matter I suppose,” cried Mr. Morrison, “what the boy is called since it was to please your benefactors. Remember Led the next shall be to please your father.”

The old gentleman then surveyed Adolphus.—

“Gad zookers Walsingham,” cried he, “what a giant you are grown; and there is Led as fat as a porpus. Well wife let us have a good supper quite snug and comfortable; a brace of roast ducks stuffed with sage and onions, and plenty of gravy.”

“What is become of Mary?” said Leonard, looking anxiously round the room; and at the mention of her name the heart of Adolphus sunk within him; but he was seasonably relieved when Mrs. Morrison informed them that she was gone for a few days into the country; then turning to Adolphus, with tears in her eyes, a sight he could hardly support—

“Indeed Mr. Walsingham,” cried she, “you would scarce recollect my once blooming Mary were you now to see her since her illness. But she is now much better; and I hope that god will spare my darling a great while longer.”

At this language of the fond and tender mother's heart, Adolphus felt such intolerable anguish that he

was obliged to complain of a violent head-ache to apologize for his want of spirits.

“What you have brought your little favorite back again Mr. Walsingham,” said Harriet, caressing Sambo with her accustomed kindness.”

“Yes madam,” cried Adolphus, “and in some cases would sooner have parted with my life than with this faithful little animal.”

“I should very much like to know whose dog that was,” cried Mr. Morrison, winking at his son, “that you are so confoundedly fond of. But I would wager sixpence, nay, I will go as far as tenpence, which is all I can afford, that it belonged to a lady that dined with us at the Priory.”

“Did she indeed!” exclaimed Adolphus, quite forgetting himself, “did lady Theodora indeed dine with you at my uncle’s!”

On his saying this, they all laughed so heartily at his expence, that he began to fancy himself very ridiculous; and thus ended the conversation.

After staying a day or two with this most amiable family he departed; promising that he would write to them a full and particular account of all his proceedings when he arrived at the priory and his mind was more tranquillized.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

On stopping to change horses at the first inn on the road, Adolphus observed numbers of country people of the most respectable appearance flocking to the adjacent village, known by the name of Pennington, and through which he necessarily had to pass, being on the road to Austincourt Priory.

"Can you inform me," cried he to the master of the inn, "if there is a public fair held this day at any of the neighbouring villages!"

"Yes, sir," replied he, "there is something public, but very different from a fair, at which people go to laugh, here they will go to cry: I warrant there will not be a dry eye to be seen in the whole village."

"Then it is the funeral of some person whose loss is greatly lamented;" observed Adolphus.

"Greatly indeed!" replied the innkeeper, "I shall never live to see her fellow in these parts. She fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and was a blessing to all the poor both far and near. But her funeral is over: she died in child-bed this day three weeks; and her tender lamb is gone with her. She was buried the week following; and this day there is a funeral sermon to be preached at Pennington by our worthy rector himself, who was her husband. And this lady was so beloved, I say again, there will not be a dry eye to be seen in the whole church."

"Have the goodness to tell me the name of your rector," cried Adolphus.

"Austin court:" replied the innkeeper, "Mr. Edmund Austin court, the youngest son of Sir Mildred Austin court, of Austin court Priory."

At these words Adolphus fell back in the chaise almost deprived of the power of articulation, till a flood of tears came seasonably to his relief.

"Poor Edmund," cried he, it is then the spirit of thy gentle Julia that has fled to heaven and left thee so deeply to deplore her loss! Brother of my heart! companion of my early days! in what a moment of affliction shall we meet!"

He then desired the postillion to drive on, scarcely knowing what he did, or seeing any object on the road till they reached Pennington, when he suddenly formed the resolution of disguising himself as much as he possibly could in order that he might be present at so awful and sacred a ceremony; and that he might behold with what fortitude a christian and a man bends to the rod that chastizes him.

"I will go," cried Adolphus, "and in an obscure corner of the church listen to the voice of my beloved Edmund; and though unseen, I will be a mourner in the truest sense, for my sorrows will be private."

With this determination he desired the postillion to stop at the first inn, and there to take off his luggage and wait for his return; just slightly observing that it was his intention to go and hear the funeral sermon which was to be preached in the village. Accordingly, wrapping himself in a large great coat, he proceeded to the church porch, where numbers had already assembled to await the opening of the doors. The young and the old; the sickly and the infirm: while

the mournful sound of the church bell announced the approach of their rector.

At length he advanced with a firm and steady step; his hands folded on his breast; and his eyes meekly raised towards heaven. Adolphus directed one look towards him; but it was enough!—his heart acknowledged his beloved cousin. Every nerve trembled—every pulse beat convulsively;—and at the moment that Edmund slowly advanced to the pulpit he could have knelt at his feet and worshipped him.

Adolphus obtained a seat, where, if his emotions got the better of him, he could neither be seen nor heard. But he found it impossible to restrain his feelings when Edmund, opening the first page of his book, commenced with the following words:—

*“O God! unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden!”*

These were the words of Sir Mildred Austincourt in his last interview with Adolphus; and the remembrance of that agonizing scene rushed so forcibly on his recollection, that unable to controul his feelings, he sobbed aloud, which drew the attention of all eyes to the spot from whence it proceeded? and amongst others, the eyes of a female, who, like himself, appeared to shun the public gaze as much as possible. She was of a light and elegant form, the little that could be discerned of her, and habited in the deepest mourning. But not a feature of her face was visible; a thick impervious veil being thrown over a close bonnet, which completely answered the purpose for which it was designed.

The voice of Edmund was weak and tremulous at

the beginning of the sermon, but grew manly and firm at its conclusion. He endeavoured to impress on the minds of his auditors that meek submission to the will of the most high even when sinking under a load of worldly calamity which was so truly amplified in himself; and when he ceased, the divine truths he had conveyed, and the affecting pathos of his voice, so melted every heart to reverence and to praise, that, if any indeed had been tempted to come there to "scoff" they must have "remained to pray." And as the congregation slowly departed from the place of worship they bowed their heads with religious enthusiasm towards their beloved rector, almost regarding him as a tutelary saint.

Adolphus observed the lady in mourning follow at a distance the steps of his beloved cousin; he saw her enter his house: his curiosity was on the rack; a strange fluttering seized his heart; he knocked at the door; and it was opened, not by a servant, but by the lady herself. Not once looking at him she hastily said,—

"Mr. Austincourt sir is too much indisposed to see company at present. Have the goodness to leave your business and I will report it to him."

Adolphus could support silence no longer.

"Not see me!" uttered he, "will then my once tenderly beloved Edmund refuse admittance to Adolphus Walsingham?"

The surprise which instantly took possession of the lovely features of Miss Isabella Montgomery (for it was her who now stood before Adolphus) may be better imagined than described,—

"Adolphus Walsingham," exclaimed she, "Oh! how fortunate is the moment of your arrival here;

how consolatory to the feelings of a yet agonized and doating husband will be your presence to our poor suffering Edmund, who has lost at one heavy stroke of affliction both wife and child. Our poor Julia," here the tears of Miss Montgomery were not restrained; they fell fast over her lovely face, nor were the feelings of Adolphus less visibly affected. At length after an effort to recover herself Miss Montgomery continued:—"It is wrong Mr. Walsingham, I am sensibly aware that it is wrong still to indulge in emotions which so powerfully affect me; for Julia was an angel while she yet lived to bless us, and has only rejoined her kindred spirits which are in heaven; to whose unerring wisdom we must submit. Of course you were informed by your uncle Sir Mildred Austincourt of the marriage of your cousin Edmund with my sister Mr. Walsingham; were you not?"

Adolphus replied, that the intelligence had reached him through a letter of Mr. Morrison written to his son; and that the communication then afforded him the most heartfelt joy; long having suspected the attachment which subsisted between his beloved Edmund and the amiable Julia, whom, he fondly anticipated to behold as the wife of a relative, towards whom his heart had ever beat with the most unchanged affection, confidence, and esteem, convinced that, even when accused and driven an exiled wanderer from the sheltering roof of his uncle, Edmund only was unshaken in his principles towards him."

To which Miss Montgomery replied as she conducted Adolphus into an adjoining apartment,—

"Ah! how well, and how justly have you appreciated the worth of your cousin, in the supposition that his

sentiments could never change towards you. Believe me, no : when you were most wronged and vilely traduced and slandered by that ungrateful viper and his mother, Frederic and lady Austincourt ; when they would so often exclaim against you to the too credulous ear of Sir Mildred, how frequently have I heard Edmund warm in your praise ; nay, he has boldly asserted your innocence in a manner that has intimidated both the mother and the son, and sent them in shame and confusion from the presence of Sir Mildred Austincourt. Poor Julia too, she was your advocate Mr. Walsingham, and honored with the friendship and confidence of lady Theodora Percy, the most unreserved conversations used to pass between them on the subject of your misfortunes and supposed disgrace ; in which the latter always appeared to take a deep and extraordinary interest."

At the mention of lady Theodora, Adolphus exhibited his usual marks of embarrassment and agitation, which was not unnoticed by Miss Montgomery, as he exclaimed in a faltering accent,—

"And yet madam, I have the misfortune to recollect with the most anguished sense of mortification and regret that lady Theodora once thought me guilty of a crime the most odious and disgraceful to the character of man. Ah ! how do I know that she does not even now think me culpable in the seduction and disgrace of Fanny Roseberry !"—

And feeling the most resistless curiosity, as well as anxiety, at once to learn the true state of lady Theodora's sentiments towards him, Adolphus suddenly and emphatically pronounced,—

Oh Miss Montgomery ! if I am again doubted—

again suspected—and by lady Theodora, farewell every hope of happiness with Adolphus Walsingham.”

Miss Montgomery beheld the agitation of Adolphus with astonishment not unmixed with concern; but whether from a cause of necessity, or inclination, remained silent. Not a sentence escaped her lips till the entrance of Mr. Edmund Austincourt, who was apprised of the arrival of his cousin, and in whose arms he was presently fast locked, and welcomed with the most undisguised affection.

“My father,” cried Edmund, “assured me that you were either going to embark, or had embarked for England; but how little did I flatter myself my dear Adolphus with the expectation that your first visit would be paid to me. Alas! did you know how greatly I stand in need of the consolation of a friend!—but Isabella has told you all—the sympathising glance of that well-known countenance already assures me that I have nothing to inform you of.”

“I know the full measure of your grief my beloved Edmund,” cried Adolphus, “and though it is utterly vain to offer you consolation on such a subject, yet, I trust that my presence here will not wholly be unavailing.”

The most unreserved and affecting conversation now passed between the two long attached friends and affectionate cousins; in which Adolphus disclosed the whole of his history since he had quitted Austincourt Priory down to the present period; of the changed and happy prospects in his affairs. Nor did he forget to entertain his cousin with a warm and animated description of his Caledonian friends and benefactors; adding, that “Scotland was one of the finest countries

in the world ; the natives of which had left an impression on his mind not easily to be eradicated. For who indeed that has overcome the dangers of a perilous voyage, and been sheltered in a hospitable land with the welcome smile of a brother and a christian can ungratefully pronounce that the brave honest Scots are not as worthy imitation as any of God's creatures. Believe me Edmund, there is not a nation which I so greatly respect and admire ; nor a race of men whose characters I so highly venerate as the generous Highlanders."

" Amongst whom it is probable that you may have encountered some of the ancient descendants of the famed and celebrated Rob Roy ;" cried Edmund smiling but by no means ill-naturedly. •

While Adolphus almost immediately replied,—

" I do not aver that I did not ; but had you listened like me to the many affecting stories related of poor Rob and his unfortunate family when driven to desperation by the outrage which was committed on their property, you would not be surprised that I did not share in the invectives so liberally bestowed on the luckless freebooter ; particularly when I reflected that in my own country we had Rob Roys too, who, if they did not seek our property, at least gave us but little power or chance of protecting it."

The late melancholy event which had so recently taken place in the domestic happiness of Edmund next became a topic of serious and most affecting conversation between the two friends ; and after a pause, in which both endeavoured to recover their self-possession into something like settled composure, Edmund exclaimed,—



“ But I am resigned! yes Adolphus, I am now cheerfully resigned to the will of heaven; who, in taking an angel from me, has not left me without consolation; I have a blest assurance that we shall meet again where death nor suffering never more can divide us. For has not my Julia met the full reward of all her merited virtues. She was a crown of glory to her husband; and has now obtained a heavenly one from her eternal father. Her exemplary goodness; her chaste tenderness; and her gentle purity of heart and simplicity of manners were indeed too lovely not to be deplored that they are no longer permitted to be placed in our living sight. But do they not live in my soul?—is not Julia still present?—does she not hover over me in my dreams?—and when I awake from sweet refreshing slumbers, do I not pronounce her name still with the fond extacy of a doating husband?—has not my soul been conversing?—and do I not softly murmur, ‘ Julia is no longer dead: a short space and I shall behold her?’—This, all this, my beloved Adolphus whispers peace and consolation to your afflicted Edmund.”

The voice of Edmund, as he uttered this, was softened into melody; and though his mild blue eyes yet swam in tears as they glanced at a full-length portrait of his lovely wife which was placed in a conspicuous part of the apartment, he had regained his composure at the entrance of Miss Montgomery, who led the way to an elegant saloon prepared with refreshment; of which she intreated Adolphus to partake, and observing with a smile that, “ she hoped he would not think of setting out for Austincourt Priory so soon as he had at first intended, but favor them with a longer visit for

the sake of poor Edmund; on whose depressed spirits he had already wrought a miracle; and indeed I do not know any human being now," added Miss Montgomery with a gentle sigh, "who possesses so powerful an influence over his feelings: since the death of my beloved sister I have not seen him so tranquil and composed. Would it not be therefore cruel of you Mr. Walsingham to leave Edmund again a prey to melancholy reflections, when your enlivening presence can so certainly dispel them."

There was a witching smile which played round the mouth of Miss Montgomery as she directed these words towards Adolphus, and a blush which had very perceptibly spread its roseate hues on her fair cheek, as with downcast eyes she awaited his reply; which, was as follows:—

"And can my presence be more enlivening than your's, Miss Montgomery?" uttered he. "Can any man be a prey to gloomy reflections when charming woman, in the form of an administering angel, condescends to bestow a smile of sympathy to calm his sorrows and soften his cares? Surely the blest aid of woman's friendship in such an hour must be preferable to any other; even though it were indeed shared by a brother or relative beloved! Without woman the world would be a desert to man my dear Miss Montgomery; and I am sure that were Edmund himself here he would heartily subscribe to my opinion."

Miss Montgomery blushed a yet deeper red at a compliment so generally, but at the same moment so gracefully and warmly expressed; but why she did so we must not be too curious to inquire. It was a compliment not merely directed to herself, but offered

to the whole of her sex. Why then did the fair Isabella blush, as with modest diffidence she replied,—

“You overrate the little services I have been able to render the husband of my sister Mr. Walsingham, with too flattering an encomium on their merit. Not that I deem my own sex wholly unworthy of the favorable sentiments you have just been pleased to utter in their praise; but as far as relates to myself, I can only say, that Edmund Austincourt is deserving of every attention and kindness that can be shewn towards him from Isabella Montgomery, either in the character of a sister, or a friend. But when do you really purpose to visit the Priory, Mr. Walsingham?”

To which Adolphus answered :—

“To visit the Priory, Miss Montgomery, ought to have been my first intention on my arrival in this neighbourhood. A visit indeed is too cold a term to be applied to the duty which is immediately incumbent on me in flying to the arms of my uncle, whom I most eagerly and anxiously long to behold and embrace. To him therefore my first duty should have been paid. Here, however, the attraction has been great, and my inclination almost as powerful. Edmund, the brother of my heart, the earliest companion of my youthful days!—Edmund in affliction!—Edmund in sorrow, in suffering, and not devote a moment to those sorrows and those sufferings!—Could I Miss Montgomery think at such a moment of departing?—Impossible!—My heart would have reproached me with unkindness when again under the roof of that father, whose son had been the earliest friend of my heart!—In short, I would if possible persuade Edmund to be the companion of my journey to the Priory.”

Miss Montgomery shook her head, but remained silent. At length Adolphus exclaimed,—

“You look doubtingly, Miss Montgomery! Are you then of opinion that Edmund would reject my wishes?”

“I am certainly but of one opinion, Mr. Walsingham,” answered Miss Montgomery, “which is, that he won’t go with you to Sir Mildred’s.”

“You surprise me, Miss Montgomery!” cried Adolphus. “What objection can Edmund possibly have to go to his father’s?”

“I do not know that I should be permitted to tell you were Edmund himself to be apprised of my intentions,” said Miss Montgomery; “but as I mean to speak the truth always, without having permission from any body at all, I see no crime in telling you what you must soon be informed of, that Edmund’s objection is, though a very fair one, centred in one object, and that object is”——

“Whom?” impatiently demanded Adolphus.

“Lady Theodora Percy!” immediately replied Miss Montgomery; and Adolphus became suddenly transfixed with amazement; turning at the same moment as pale as ashes. He falteringly inquired, why lady Theodora Percy had become an object of importance to Edmund Austincourt; when, to the still greater astonishment and surprise of Adolphus, Miss Montgomery, without the smallest hesitation, made the following reply.

“Because Mr. Walsingham, lady Theodora Percy has long been an object of Edmund Austincourt’s displeasure,” cried Miss Montgomery with increased warmth and energy; “and here comes Edmund Aus-

tincourt himself to prove the truth of my assertion. Here comes the grand sultan to reveal the secrets of the blue chamber, of which he alone keeps the key of mystery, and I leave you together to solve it if you can."

And, at the moment that Miss Montgomery made her exit at one door Edmund made his entrance at another; when the following explanation took place between them.

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

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On the countenance of Edmund Austincourt there did not appear the slightest embarrassment or confusion; but his fine features exhibited as usual the index of a pure and benevolent mind, and the mildest disposition; while that of Adolphus now betrayed an alarming and violent emotion which he could not conceal; for it was a symptom which too strongly expressed both love and jealousy; and which being perceived by Edmund, he exclaimed, though with a calm and placid smile,—

"Isabella, I perceive, with whom you have had a long conference, has, it is probable, been conveying to you some displeasing information respecting a little disagreement which at present subsists between me and lady Theodora Percy. But do not let this cir-

cumstance occasion you the slightest uneasiness my dear Adolphus, it is a mere childish quarrel on her ladyship's part ; while on mine, I candidly own it originated in the purest sentiment of friendship and unaffected zeal towards her. In one word,—I became a mentor to lady Theodora ; in which capacity my services were rejected, if not wholly condemned, laughed at, and despised ; since which period I have unfortunately become the object of her ladyship's displeasure, while she only remains the object of my concern, my pity, and my compassion."

" Lady Theodora the object of your pity, of your compassion, your concern ! You speak strangely, Edmund, and in strong terms !" exclaimed Adolphus.

To which Edmund coolly replied,—

" I speak truly Adolphus ; and as to my terms, there never were more appropriate ones to the subject in question."

" I think not if they relate to that lovely incomparable creature !" cried Adolphus, betraying great warmth and energy ; at which Edmund only smiled, while in a more serious tone he uttered,—

" Yes, lady Theodora is certainly the object of my concern, of my compassion ; I would that she were not equally so of my displeasure. She is the object of my concern, because I fear she is acting inconsistent with her own happiness ; and I compassionate her youthful inexperience which will ultimately expose her to error, nay, to censure before she is aware of it ; and if I also once more repeat that, under existing circumstances, she has excited my displeasure, you will not wonder at it ?"

With these words Edmund sat down very calmly in

a seat opposite to that of Adolphus, who exhibited the most powerful symptoms of agitation and curiosity, at the same moment that he grasped the hand of Edmund and exclaimed,—

“Oh! torture me not thus dearest Edmund! I love lady Theodora beyond the power of language to express! I have always thought lady Theodora an angel! Speak at once and ease these racking apprehensions—these cruel doubts; a bare suspicion of which would hurry me to desperation and to madness! Say, then, is lady Theodora unworthy of the love I bear her?—Has she fallen beneath my esteem?—In what has she acted as to demand thy censure, and call forth thy displeasure? She, so pure, so spotless that angels looked not fairer in the eye of heaven than was the young, the lovely Theodora! Speak then, Edmund, tell me all you know of Theodora! Is she not the same I ever knew?

“Yes,” cried Edmund, “when you are less under the influence of a certain planet which shall be nameless I will tell you all; but truly my good cousin you are now in the skies, from which you must immediately descend, and listen to plain reason and plain sense. To a round unvarnished tale, in which, I trust I shall ‘nothing extenuate, nor ought set down in malice.’ Come, let us see how well you will behave during its narration.”

“Oh, Edmund! I intreat you to pardon my hasty and inconsiderate warmth,” immediately replied the agitated Adolphus. “I know you will forgive me; you are all goodness!”

Edmund smiled; stretched forth his hand towards Adolphus; and, after a pause, addressed his anxious and impatient cousin in the following manner.

“That lady Theodora Percy is still as pure and spotless as you ever thought her under the roof of Austincourt Priory as she is now in her own mansion where she is the sole mistress I do not presume to entertain the least suspicion. Nay, on my honour, on my soul, I think lady Theodora still as pure, as spotless as ever! But mark me Adolphus!—I think lady Theodora at the same instant thoughtless, inconsiderate, and rash; and consequently too tenacious of taking advice and following the instructions of those who would be willing to point out to her the dangers of credulity and inexperience. But I will no longer keep you in suspense: I perceive you are now suffering more than you ought, for an object, who, perhaps, would not thank you, after all, for your pains, were she even at this moment to witness your disquietude: but to proceed.—

“Lady Theodora Percy at the demise of her father of course became the heiress of the whole of the earl’s splendid possessions, his lordship having no other child. Previous to which she was summoned by the immediate and express command of that father to Italy, a few months before he terminated his mortal existence. You cannot have forgotten count Molini, that dark and mysterious foreigner. You may remember him when at Austincourt Priory; and that he then had been chosen by the earl of Percy, of whom he was a confidential and intimate friend, as the guardian and protector of his youthful daughter, while conveying her to the shores of England, and placing her under the protection of my mother. Well, the count certainly discharged his trust; but you may also remember the almost unconquerable dislike, not to say aversion which Theodora, child as she then was, ever



evinced towards this count Molini. You know he did not long protract his stay in England; and that at his departure the little Theodora could scarcely be prevailed on by my mother to bid him farewell.”—

“Oh! too surely, I remember it well,” cried Adolphus.

And Edmund, lowering the tone of his voice almost to a whisper, resumed his conversation in the following manner.

“Notwithstanding the circumstance to which I have just alluded, this count Molini was again the chosen ambassador of lord Percy to conduct his daughter into Italy. He came express for lady Theodora to attend her father who believed himself to be in the last stage of a dangerous disease; and, at this period, Adolphus, my own mother, lady Austincourt, was at the point of death. My brother having married a few months previous to this event, was of course absent with his bride in the gay metropolis. I alone remained with my father at the bedside of my expiring mother, with the exception of lady Theodora Percy; and in this critical moment count Molini arrived at Austincourt Priory, with the express mandate of immediately conveying lady Theodora to Italy. In vain my father urged a few days preparation; but neither the intreaties of Sir Mildred, nor the supplications of my then dying parent, had any avail with count Molini. Lady Theodora had only time to snatch a last embrace of the expiring lady Austincourt, who, as I was present at the affecting interview, pronounced, as she wrung the trembling hand of Theodora, the following mysterious and never-to-be-forgotten words; which, at this moment, thrills through my recollection:—

“ ‘ You have sworn a dreadful oath Theodora :—to me it is sworn and to heaven. You have sworn eternally to protect and never to abandon the’——

“ My mother’s voice died away in broken hollow murmurs as she finished the sentence to me wholly unintelligible. I could only catch the faint reply made to her by the weeping Theodora as she quitted the dying sufferer, which was,—

“ ‘ May I forfeit heaven’s sacred sanctuary when I forget, madam, the nature of my oath to you and’——

“ Lady Theodora paused ; cast her eyes fearfully round the apartment ; perceived me ; and for the few minutes that she afterwards remained at the bedside of lady Austincourt preserved the most impenetrable and awful silence. She was about to depart perhaps for ever—I fixed my eyes on her youthful and innocent countenance—and, oh ! Adolphus, I could not resist the impulse of the most compassionate interest towards her. If she has been unwarily led into error, thought I, is it not the duty of my sacred function to warn her of her danger, and to snatch her, if it be not yet too late, from the incautious promise she has given of keeping a rash, an inconsiderate, and perhaps a fatal and imprudent oath ! And I caught hold of her trembling hand, in an agitation not to be described, as she was leaving the chamber of lady Austincourt to enter the travelling carriage of the impatient count Molini,—

“ ‘ Stay yet a moment lady Theodora !’ exclaimed I, ‘ stay and hear me ! If you have sworn an imprudent oath, for the love of heaven, leave not my mother in the supposition that you will perform it. Instantly revoke it rash girl while means are in your power : a moment longer and the opportunity will be lost for ever !’

“ Never Adolphus shall I forget the firm, undaunted, and peculiar manner in which, at this moment, she addressed me ; nor the proud disdain she threw into her countenance as, waving her hand, she bade me instantly to depart :—

“ ‘ And think you so meanly of Theodora Mr. Edmund Austincourt,’ cried she with kindling blushes mounting to her cheek, ‘ as to imagine that I would send up any vow to all-gracious heaven that I did not mean rigidly to perform. You ought to have known me better than to suppose I would ever contract a sacred oath, the nature of which I had not judgment to learn the right or wrong of. If this is your opinion of womankind it is a very poor one: but know sir it is not the case with Theodora Percy. The oath I was called upon to swear to your dying mother was an imperative one, for it was that of humanity ; nor shall I repent of its performance, even though it were to subject me to the reproach of all mankind. For I feel conscious of its purity ; and that it will never produce on my mind the impressions of compunction or remorse. Thus far I wish to exculpate myself from your ungenerous suspicions Mr. Edmund Austincourt : but to the performance of my oath, know, that sooner than revoke it, I would myself become a sacrifice : and perish than forfeit its allegiance with those to whom it is sworn.’

“ ‘ It is sufficient,’ cried I, somewhat warmly, ‘ I do not presume to inquire further lady Theodora, ‘ and yet I own, for proffered kindness I did not expect to meet such an indignant mode of expression : however, I pardon you. Your youthful inexperience and romantic disposition, though lovely, warm, and generous,

made me entertain a thousand fears which, perhaps, are groundless. I have doubtless no business to pry into the secrets of lady Theodora, but I call heaven to witness that my motive was friendship, was zeal towards her; at the same time that I could not divest myself of a warning voice, which, in the fatal performance of making rash oaths, but too forcibly reminded me of the fate of my poor cousin Adolphus Walsingham."

"The crimson hues which had only a moment before so beautifully painted the cheeks of lady Theodora were, at the mention of your name Adolphus, changed to those of the palest lilly; a convulsive sigh burst from her bosom; and mournfully she exclaimed"—

"Your cousin Adolphus Walsingham was my friend, he was also my preserver, and the preserver of Camilla Grandison; and you do me wrong if you think I have forgotten him."

"With these words the mysterious girl, pronouncing a cold farewell, instantly stept into the chaise with count Molini. In a few days afterwards Adolphus, lady Austincourt breathed her last; leaving me impressed still with a conviction that the oath which she extorted from the lips of Theodora was one wrapt up in strange and awful mystery, as also inimical to her peace, nay, perhaps, to the happiness of her future days."

"I am distracted with the thought," cried Adolphus, "yet, surely, dear Edmund, these are not sufficient grounds for prejudice against the lovely creature."

"I did not admit that they were so," answered Edmund, "my opinion of lady Theodora, as being one

of the most perfect of her gentle sex, remained unchanged till the period of"——

Edmund paused.

"For heaven's sake finish your sentence," exclaimed Adolphus. "What period do you allude to?"

Edmund instantly replied.

"Till the period of her return to England. It was then Adolphus that I began painfully to remark a change in the disposition and manners of lady Theodora so unlike to her former self, that I could attribute it to nothing but the force of credulity and improper example in the companions she brought over with her, the count and countess Molini; to whose dangerous society she had then been for many months exposed. It appears that lord Percy did not survive but a very short time after the arrival of his daughter in Italy; to whom, with the exception of a few legacies to private individuals, he had bequeathed the whole of his splendid property, which, far be it from me to say has been improperly bestowed. Lady Theodora has a heart flowing with the milk of human kindness; and her benefactions to the unfortunate have been numerous and liberal. She is adored in the neighbourhood of Austincourt Priory; while in her mansion she resides as the goddess of melting charity. But to the immediate point in question; after which discussion, you shall judge whether or not I have been unnecessarily severe.

"In the suit of the count and countess Molini there was a youthful stranger of so mysterious an appearance that, from the habit which he constantly wore, it was no easy matter to judge of what quality, or nation, he was born; but his dark complexion, which bordered

nearly on the olive, bespoke him to be a Spaniard. Nor were his manners, or conversation very likely to throw much light on his character or disposition; he was distant and reserved almost to frigidity; and when you would suddenly gaze on him, he would instantly turn away and make some slight pretext for immediately retiring to his apartment; in which he would seclude himself from all other society for whole days together. In short, he was so singular and extraordinary a personage, as frequently to excite the observation and curiosity of my father; who one morning when lady Theodora called to pay her accustomed visit at the Priory, demanded, in his usual blunt way to know, who the young shy foreigner was; whether he was a relative of the count or countess Molini; or only a stranger who had accompanied them from Italy.—

“ ‘ But saving their presence,’ added Sir Mildred, they had much better have brought us over a dumb and curious animal; for this young man, this Antonia as they call him, is perfectly savage; and by no means of the pleasing kind. He never opens his mouth but when he is spoken to; and shuts it again as soon as he has pronounced a cold monosyllable. Then he is so shy and distant, that if you suddenly encounter him in a walk, he runs as eagerly from you, as if he were pursued by a pack of hounds. But perhaps your ladyship can account for the whimsicalities of this strange uncommon young man; you of course lady Theodora know him better.”

“ ‘ It was impossible to express our surprise and astonishment when we perceived that the countenance of lady Theodora had undergone a considerable change

while Sir Mildred had made this inquiry; and in a tremulous and suddenly alarmed voice she exclaimed—

“Me sir know Mr. Antonia! indeed you mistake; he is the nephew of the countess Molini; and that is all I precisely know of him. As to his whimsicalities or singularities, I am no further acquainted with them than you are.’

“‘Indeed Theodora,’ uttered my father with a too visible incredulous smile, ‘I am very happy to hear you say so; for, to say truth, I have no great predilection for the character or principles of your Italian noblesse. And very glad to find you are so little intimate with the young Antonia, of whom, indeed, I have not received the most pleasing impressions.’

“‘And yet sir, Antonia is thought most amiable in his own country, which is not Italy;’ cried lady Theodora. ‘Antonia is not an Italian; at least, I believe not: though I never thought this circumstance worth my inquiry. It is of no consequence to me where Antonia was born.’

“Her ladyship’s carriage having drawn up she arose to depart; but not without leaving an impression on the mind both of Sir Mildred and myself which has never been effaced.”

“And what impression was that?” impatiently demanded Adolphus.

To which Edmund replied.

“That lady Theodora knew more of the young Antonia than she chose to reveal; and which circumstance afterwards was but too clearly verified in the following manner.

“Being requested by Sir Mildred one evening to call at Heath Cottage to inquire after the health of

lady Theodora (who had been slightly indisposed), I entered without ceremony, into the apartments which she usually occupied, but encountered only there her attendant Brunette, whom she had brought over with her from Italy; and who informing me that her lady was much better, directed me to the chambers which were appropriated to the use of the count and countess Molini and their suit.—

“ ‘ And if not there Signior,’ uttered she, I dare say you will find her and Mr. Antonia in the nursery with little Frances. My mistress is always there when she can spare a moment’s time; and so is Mr. Antonia. They are both so fond of the pretty creature that I am sure she will be completely spoiled.’ ”

“ At these words of the loquacious abigail you may naturally suppose me to have been planet-struck Adolphus; and I received her intelligence with amazement.

“ Find lady Theodora in the nursery with Mr. Antonia and little Frances,” repeated I, “ and pray Mrs. Brunette, how long is it since you have made your lady a nurse? and who is the pretty creature you allude to?

“ With some surprise and embarrassment as if fearful she had committed an error she replied,—

“ ‘ How signior! have you never seen the pretty little Italian foundling that my lady has adopted, which was left at the door of the convent in the middle of the night just before we quitted Italy? Holy Virgin! perhaps I should not have told you of it! yet, I was never forbid to do it: and I do’nt see where’s the harm of telling of a benevolent action. For what could be more benevolent than to take a poor helpless babe under our protection when it is thrown on the wide



world by its unnatural parents without any. I am certain signior, that you will allow my lady was very kind in giving it a shelter, when probably it had a chance of being starved to death with the holy friars in the convent : truly the poor babe could not have lived on beads and a cross though they can.'

" 'And I question much my good Brunette,' uttered I, 'whether the beads and cross are not the least consideration of their order.'

" On this I hastily and impatiently quitted Brunette to go in quest of her mistress, of whom, oh, forgive me Adolphus ! I, at this moment entertained the most alarming suspicions. Of the young Antonia I had not much better ; and of the little foundling—There I did not permit my thoughts so injuriously to stray—No Theodora ! mentally exclaimed I as I mechanically measured my way to the apartment to which her attendant had directed me, no Theodora ! it is impossible to think you otherwise than innocent. Surely the protection of helpless infancy is not incompatible with female honour or feminine prudence. Heaven forbid that any just or honest man should admit a thought so vile, so ungenerous. Oh no ! if any there be, they are monsters and not men ; and fit only for themselves. May they herd together, a race unworthy to dignify the human character ; or give birth to sensibility, to feeling, or to love. No sooner had I piously ejaculated this sentiment than I listened and heard the melodious voice of lady Theodora addressing, as I then imagined, the sleeping innocent whom she had fostered with her protection ; but judge of my astonishment, when a soft and mournful voice often interrupted by broken sobs responded,—





**Founded on Facts.**

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THE  
**ORPHAN BOY,**  
OR  
**TEST OF INNOCENCE.**

By

**MRS. CATHERINE G. WARD,**

AUTHRESS OF

*The ROSE OF CLAREMONT;* "Mysterious Marriage;" "My Native Land;  
"Daughter of St. Omer;" "Sacred Deposit;" "Bachelor's Heiress;"  
"Robertina;" "Poems;" &c. &c. &c.

**VOL. III.**

— "He is yours! and he is mine!  
Not yours, nor mine alone!  
A friendless Orphan Boy!"

— 000 —

**ENTERED AT STATIONERS HALL.**

— 000 —

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1821.













## CHAPTER XLVIII.

“ I as mechanically seated myself beside lady Theodora as I entered her apartment without knocking (an omission which the rules of good breeding, and even decency, by no means prescribed), and was at a loss what apology to offer for this once having departed so strangely from them; at the same moment that I felt shocked and disgusted at the discovery, which, I then imagined, I had just made of the impropriety and levity of her conduct towards the mysterious young foreigner; and I waited in silence to see what visible effect my sudden appearance had upon her feelings before I attempted to enter into an explanation which might lead to any discussion of an unpleasing nature. But judge of my astonishment, and my increased disgust towards the conduct of the unblushing lady Theodora, when, looking at her countenance, I could not perceive in it the slightest symptom of embarrassment or confusion, much less could I discover a consciousness of that innate diffidence and timid apprehension which is sometimes produced by a sense of impropriety; in the countenance of lady Theodora no such distinguishing signs were in the least apparent; but all was serene and mild as spring-tide flowers; except indeed, that a more than usually playful smile dimpled her roseate cheeks while I pronounced, perhaps with peculiar expression and energy,—

“ “ I was authorised lady Theodora to wait on you by the commands of Sir Mildred Austincourt to inquire

after your ladyship's health. He heard that you had been indisposed; but I am happy to find that you are so far recovered as to admit of familiar converse with your most particular friends. I broke in upon your ladyship somewhat suddenly, and must now beg to apologize for my intrusion.'

"Whether a degree of severity accompanied these words, or that a sneer was too perceptible in my countenance as I uttered them I know not, but she instantly replied to me in the following manner:

" 'And it would be equally reasonable if Mr. Edmund Austincourt would also apologize to lady Theodora for his extreme rudeness at the same moment; in which she cannot suppose him to be authorized by his father in any inquiry he might have to make after her health. As to familiar conversation with particular friends, I do not know sir, at what, or to whom, your allusion points. But pray let me ask, if we cannot converse familiarly with our particular friends, with whom else ought we? What but friendship can demand implicit confidence?'

" 'Is there not a softer and a more sacred tie, cried I, 'will not love lady Theodora require it?'

"To which she replied—

" 'Whatever it may require it does not always merit the confidence which it so frequently abuses.'

" 'Pardon me lady Theodora,' uttered I, it is not love which abuses confidence, it is its counterfeit; but like the base coin it is soon detected; and afterwards never re-assumes its imposing appearance.'

" 'O but love is entirely out of the question,' answered she, 'I have many friends, but, thank hea-

“ ‘Not one!’ exclaimed I, fixing my eyes intently on a glove which I knew to be Antonia’s, and which through accident and incautious haste he had left on the table. Lady Theodora’s eyes followed mine in the same direction and instantly her playful vivacity forsook her, and she appeared to be under the influence of some sudden, most painful and distressing emotion. For a few moments she continued silent and embarrassed; at length she made an effort to recover herself, and began to stammer out, perceiving that I still fixed my eye steadily on the glove.—

“ ‘I wish Brunette would come and clear away all this litter. What a room she has made with her work. I protest this wench will presently leave her whole wardrobe in my apartment.’

“ ‘Here is a glove too,’ cried I, affecting not to notice the extraordinary emotion; while I surveyed her now blushing countenance with a look of keen and penetrating irony, ‘perhaps this also is the property of Mistress Brunette.’

“ On which lady Theodora started up, and coming towards me with a manner wholly unembarrassed, snatched the glove instantly out my hand, while she indignantly uttered,—

“ ‘No sir, that is my property; at least it must remain in my possession till I have an opportunity of returning it to the rightful owner.’

“ ‘And who is that lady Theodora?’ impatiently demanded I.

“ To which she answered with the most dignified composure, and in a voice at once firm, impressive, and affecting; for I saw that her eyes were moistened with tears,—

“ ‘ I am not used to be thus questioned, Mr. Edmund Austincourt, nor do I know by what authority you imperatively, and must observe officiously, pry into my concerns. They can be nothing to you, even were my actions as reprehensible as you are pleased to surmise them to be. I do not know what right you have to censure me.’

“ ‘ Oh ! lady Theodora !’ uttered I, ‘ and can you suppose me so indifferent to your welfare, or so little sensible of your worth ; you so lately the ward of my father, the companion of my infancy, the sister play-mate of my boyish happy days, when nature and youthful innocence joined hand in hand to render you as pure as you were lovely and joyous ; when no act disguised your manners, nor dissimulation veiled your heart ; when loveliest of the loveliest, Theodora was also the happiest of the happiest, the purest and the best. Now I behold you’—

“ I paused for a moment as I contemplated, as I imagined the fallen angel before me : who turning towards me with a mixture of proud resentment and disdain, uttered in a voice of the most reproachful anger—

“ ‘ What do you behold me, Sir ? Speak ; unfold your dark suspicions, your mysterious mistrusts, and base unworthy conjectures, what am I ! Come, I will patiently endure and hear all you have to say, either good, bad, or indifferent ; what is Theodora Percy ?’

“ Perceiving that I was incapable of replying to her, from the surprise and astonishment into which she had thrown me, she continued with the most sarcastic smile to enjoy my confusion, and at length pronounced—

“ ‘What you do not chuse to tell me what I am, though you began to paint my portrait so prettily? I am quite disappointed—you cannot conceive how vexed I am with you; do me the favour to begin again, Mr. Edmund Austincourt.’

“ Shocked and pained beyond conception at what I conceived the extreme levity of lady Theodora, as she continued to laugh with the most provoking nonchalance, I replied indignantly—

“ ‘I fear, lady Theodora, that the portrait has too much resemblance to the original, and my heart sickens as I contemplate it.’

“ ‘Indeed,’ answered she, ‘and pray should not every portrait resemble the original? can you contradict that? However, I am indebted to you for being the artist, and if you have drawn me in false colours the fault is yours and not mine.’

“ Lady Theodora with these words would have quitted the apartment, but I was determined that she should not thus escape from the impressive warning I thought it my duty to give her, as I now considered that her passion for the mysterious Italian was decisive.

“ ‘Stay, Theodora,’ uttered I, gently detaining her, and leading her back to the seat she had quitted. Stay and listen to your monitor and friend, it is the only time that I shall ever call upon you imperatively to hear me, and perhaps the last time that I shall ever again address you in these characters.’

“ ‘To one who is really a friend, I hope I shall never be unwilling to listen,’ uttered she. ‘Now, Mr. Edmund Austincourt, what have you to advance?’

“ ‘Two words, Theodora,’ answered I, ‘one on the

score of friendship, the other in behalf of all that a woman should hold dearest in existence, her honour ! I call upon you, Theodora, most seriously to answer ingenuously one question. 'To whom does that glove belong ?'

" 'Of what consequence is that to you, Mr. Edmund Austincourt,' she replied with a faltering voice, and evidently much affected by the manner in which I addressed her.

" 'Infinitely more than you can possibly imagine, lady Theodora,' uttered I.

" 'Why then, Sir, you shall presently know,' cried she, but not without cheeks suffused with a colour of the brightest crimson. 'It belongs to the nephew of the countess Molini, Mr. Antonia. And now, Mr. Edmund Austincourt, having satisfied your curiosity in this particular, I must positively wish you a good evening ; I have business to transact, and letters to write ; my friends return to Italy much sooner than was expected ; they depart so early as the ensuing morning after this day, and I do not wish by any means personally to offer them any slight, much less wilfully appear to neglect them. The count was my father's very particular and most intimate friend ; it is my duty to attend to him while he continues to honour my mansion with his presence.'

" 'And Signior Antonia too !' uttered I with marked asperity, 'you would not willingly neglect him either ?'

" 'Certainly not,' returned she, 'would it be respectful towards the amiable countess, whom I so sincerely love, if I were ? Besides, Antonia is unfortunate—he is unhappy—would it be right to sport

with the feelings of the unfortunate, Mr. Edmund Austincourt ?’

“ ‘ I could not advance a syllable against such a plea. I could only caution lady Theodora, which I did in language most serious and impressive, not to suffer her heart to yield too easily to the attraction of the young Italian, in whose character, notwithstanding his external personal qualifications, it was probable there existed much deception. Assuredly,’ cried I, ‘ there is doubt and mystery, beware of the imprudent consequences which too often result from them. There is ever danger in mystery. I do not myself admire this Antonia. There is a strange peculiarity about him which is’—

“ ‘ Exclusively confined to the situation in which he is so peculiarly placed,’ retorted lady Theodora, ‘ he cannot avoid being peculiar ; and were you once to be made acquainted with all the particulars of his sad, sad history, you would not despise Antonia, but greatly pity him.’

“ ‘ I hope you do not love Antonia,’ cried I.

“ Instead of making the slightest reply to this question, lady Theodora burst into a most immoderate fit of laughter, and attempting to turn every thing I had said to her into playful jests, she repeated—

“ ‘ Love Antonia ! why it is impossible to hate him, he is so good a creature ; and to-morrow he returns to Italy, perhaps never more to quit it. Now, Mr. Edmund Austincourt, there is an end of our private conference. When we meet again not a sentence of Antonia—promise me implicitly. I have the strongest reasons possible for urging your compliance with this request ; shall Theodora be obeyed ?’



“ ‘ Yes ! ’ uttered I, ‘ even though silence were to forfeit my existence.’

“ ‘ It is sufficient,’ she exclaimed, and instantly departed.

“ The following morning I had the inexpressible satisfaction to learn that the count and countess, with Antonia and all their suite, had left the residence of lady Theodora Percy, and were now on their way to embark for the shores of Italy. And we beheld lady Theodora no more till the indisposition of my father rendered her visits once more necessary at Austincourt Priory. She came, but Oh ! Adolphus, how changed ! how unlike the former Theodora of our early days ! She is grown proud, disdainful, and holds her high birth and station with a pride that ill becomes her. She has grown sullen too, frowns, and talks with no one but my father ; and their conferences have of late been unusually long, and apparently of no very pleasing nature ; as when she quits Sir Mildred’s apartment, the eyes of lady Theodora appear red with weeping ; and my father is more impatient and out of humour with his domestics. Is it not strange all this mystery Adolphus, in which Sir Mildred is also in some way or other implicated as well as Theodora. Can you solve it ? ”

To which Adolphus, with a faint smile, in which it was but too plain his heart had but little connection, replied—

“ Woman is a problem of which it is impossible to attempt an elucidation ; I have, however, listened to your detail with more forbearance than at the commencement I could have imagined my shocked, surprised and agitated feelings would have permitted me.

The struggle is past and victory is mine ; and though I believe Theodora to be innocent, yet I must cease to regard her as the pure and immaculate being my fond imagination so warmly, so ardently painted her ; she is deceptive, and though I do not think Antonia has captivated her affections, yet either his real or imaginary woes, or fictitious character, has made some impression on her mind, wrought on her highly romantic disposition, and softened or rather weakened her too susceptible heart."

" Admitting this to be the case, for I will not positively aver that it is so," answered Edmund, " I hope I have uttered nothing to prejudice you so seriously against lady Theodora, as to induce you to reject the idea of your aspiring one day to the possession of her hand."

To which Adolphus, somewhat indignantly, replied—

" Surely, Edmund, you have uttered sufficient to make me revolt at the possibility of such an event ever taking place. What, marry a woman of whose honour, of whose affections, I should be doubtful and uncertain ; and who would come to my arms bound in concealment and in mystery, of which I her husband would not be permitted to partake. No, no, Edmund, my proud swelling heart would not only reject a union thus cemented, but my soul would utterly abhor it. No, no ! believe me, Edmund, that the secrets of woman's heart are never so safely lodged as when she reposes them in the breast of a confiding husband ; she is then secure from all temptation, in the refuge she has taken in the arms of her best earthly friend and protector, and like the firm oak, she may resist all

the fury of the pitiless storm, and smile at that common enemy, the world! It is impossible for me to avoid seeing lady Theodora Percy, to whom I shall ever conduct myself with propriety. I shall neither seek, nor will I shun her society; if she treats me with her wonted friendship, I will not disdain to return it; but mark me, Edmund, I will know that her conduct merits my attention first. I will have an eye upon her; not a look, not an action shall escape my penetration. I will follow her in her most secret haunts. I will know where she wanders, see with whom she converses, on whom she smiles, and by the most unceasing and persevering vigilance, discover the impenetrable mystery in which she is involved."

"You will be a bolder adventurer than e'er was mortal man if you resolve on such an undertaking my dear fellow," cried Edmund, "where if you succeed"——

"The victory will be mine;" exclaimed Adolphus.

"Unquestionably," replied Edmund, "they bravely deserve to win, who bravely resolve to conquer, difficulties. Cowards only sink beneath the conflict. When do you propose to set out for the Priory?"

"On the immediate return of my messenger from Sir Mildred," cried Adolphus. "But why Edmund will you not accompany me to your father's?"

"Merely because I would willingly avoid contention with my father," answered Edmund. "It is my duty not to offend my father; and I cannot, it appears, please him, without displeasing lady Theodora Percy."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Adolphus, "then I should please my father first, in preference to every other earthly object besides. But explain what new cause

of displeasure have you excited in the breast of her capricious ladyship?"

"Why you must know it is as strange as singular," returned Edmund, as you well know the mild disposition of my father. He has for some unaccountable reason or other, best known to himself, taken an unconquerable dislike to the little foundling that lady Theodora has adopted and brought from Italy with her; while I as unaccountably, have taken an uncommon prepossession in favour of the lovely infant. In truth I never beheld so beautiful a creature as this deserted child. I mean deserted by its inhuman parents; for in all else it is amply provided for. Lady Theodora is enthusiastically attached to it. She is constantly in the nursery with it. And as it entwines its little arms around her snowy neck, she gazes on its cherub features with such peculiar tenderness, that I have seen her dissolved in tears; after which, resigning it to the care of the nurse which she has provided for it, I have frequently heard her exclaim,—

" ' Poor deserted little Frances! how I love and pity thee! '

"In answer to which on one occasion I exclaimed,—

" ' Can Frances be deserted while lady Theodora Percy is her protectress! '

" ' But perhaps she is not destined to remain always with her protectress,' answered lady Theodora, with a look and manner that convinced me there was also some mystery attached to the history and birth of this child; with which I am also as perfectly convinced that my father Sir Mildred is acquainted. Though I am utterly at a loss to account for his dislike to the

little foundling. He never permits lady Theodora to bring the infant or her nurse to the Priory; and when by chance he sees it at Heath Cottage in his frequent visits to lady Theodora Percy, I have seen him turn as if a reptile had met his view instead of a blooming innocent who could never have offended him."

"It is most extraordinary and wonderful!" exclaimed Adolphus after a considerable pause. "I know not what to attribute such mysterious conduct, to which, I own, has the appearance of exciting suspicions by no means favourable to lady Theodora. And have you never conversed with your father on the subject of this foundling? Why should he dislike the child if there was not something dishonorable attached to its birth? But how bears lady Theodora his indifference to her young favorite?"

"In silence; and without a murmur of complaint;" cried Edmund, "yet though silent, I have seen her eyes brim full of tears when my father has turned away in disgust at the smiling infant. And I have frequently asked him why he disliked the little Italian foundling; instantly his features became convulsed with passion, and agitated by a variety of painful emotions, and in a voice impressive and commanding he bade me never to repeat my inquiry, or trouble him with any further questions respecting that child. Of course I implicitly followed his injunctions, and since which period, the conversation has never been resumed between us."

"Time only can elucidate a coincidence of circumstances so strangely involved in doubt and mystery. And till that period arrives let us patiently wait Ed-

mund," cried Adolphus, "leaving the issue to the wise ordination of a merciful and unerring Providence, who is the most sufficient judge of all human actions, and the best searcher of the human heart."

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## CHAPTER XLIX.

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The "sweet restorer balmy sleep" was, on this evening, banished from the pillow of Adolphus when he had quitted Edmund and retired to his chamber. All his golden dreams of happiness were dissolved.—all his future prospects blighted— all his bright and visionary schemes frustrated—and hope, youth's extatic and delusive promiser, only hailed him with a mockery of those ideal joys which his ardent imagination so long had painted in the form of lady Theodora Percy. She, the only being under heaven's breathing atmosphere whom he believed was chastest of the chastest, loveliest of the loveliest, and purest of the purest! Of the truth of Edmund Austincourt—of the unerring rectitude of his mind and principles he could not entertain the smallest possibility of a doubt. He had unburthened his whole heart in the painful narration he had been compelled to give of the changed and altered character of Theodora; and with the purity of that heart he was already too well acquainted to ima-

gine, even for a moment, that his communications were not faithful; and that the portrait of her whom, till now, he had thought the most faultless being in creation, the most perfect of womankind, was sincere. To sigh no longer then for the possession of Theodora was the first resolve which Adolphus determined to make in his present train of agitated and perplexed thoughts. But to cease to love her was the last, and certainly the most difficult task, which he found it a necessary duty to perform. But how was it to be accomplished? Tell me, ye votaries of fond and faithful love, whether it is so easy to forget the object in whose honor and chaste affection we have so long been taught to repose our own!—whether we can in a moment be convinced that their conduct no longer merits our esteem; or that they have ultimately ceased to become the objects of our affection! Oh! if there is a pang, which, least of all others, can admit of consolation,—which has no hope to sooth—no time can heal;—but which renders the human bosom incapable either of imparting or receiving the slightest mitigation of its hopeless anguish and despair, it is the tortured reflection, and the heart-rending pang of being obliged to confess that, the being whom we once treasured dearest in our hearts, has proved false and faithless! A pang to this there is none comparable: and Adolphus as he arose unrefreshed from his feverish slumbers felt that he could sooner and more calmly have heard the intelligence of Theodora's death, than his heart to contain any doubt or suspicion of her spotless fame. Even a confirmation would have been less torturing for it would have been certain, to the misery he now endured. Of the dark mystery in which her conduct was

involved, and with which it was but too probable that Sir Mildred himself was fully acquainted; which amounted in the mind of Adolphus to very little short of criminality with the young Italian, the mysterious Antonia, whom she had almost unblushingly confessed that she loved in her surprised and agitated conference with Edmund Austincourt. The infant foundling too, of whom she was so passionately fond:—this child on whom she doated with such extravagant marks of uncommon tenderness, and on which she bestowed such peculiar and extraordinary attention as to excite the observation of all around her, and even the displeasure of Sir Mildred! What could this infant be to her, unless that infant were the offspring of some one who was dear to her! Who could tell that it was a foundling! Perhaps it was something more to lady Theodora, it might be the child of—— Here Adolphus paused—he trembled: every nerve became convulsed—every feature distorted by the pangs of disappointed love and jealousy. Nor was it till he endeavoured to reason himself into a little calmness and composure, that he rejected the horrible suspicion from his tortured mind, of the little Frances being the child of Antonia and the fruit of Theodora's dishonour. The influence of more mature reflections however silenced for a moment such dishonourable conjectures; and bursting into an agony of tears, he ejaculated to heaven a pious and fervent prayer that his suspicions of the still loved and lovely Theodora might be forgiven him; and that henceforth he would divest himself of all ideas that contained a doubt of her spotless purity, or that might be injurious to her repose when he should arrive at Austincourt



Priory; for which place he had given orders that every thing might be in readiness to set out at an early hour the ensuing evening.

So visible were the effects however of a distracted mind on his countenance, that when he entered the apartment where Edmund and Miss Montgomery were waiting breakfast for him, his altered looks instantly arrested their attention, and they inquired with peculiar kindness if he was indisposed.

"Why, truly madam," answered Adolphus, "were I to say that I had rested well I should strangely belie my conscience; I have, on the contrary, endured a night of the most torturing inquietude, produced by reflections, which, I feel well convinced, that I ought to banish, though I cannot effect such a resolution as speedily as I might wish; yet I will shortly endeavour to do it as becomes a philosopher and a man."

"I thought Mr. Walsingham your travels in far distant countries had made the study of philosophy unnecessary;" cried Miss Montgomery with a playful smile, which was intended to dispel the gloom of despondency which clouded his fine features.

To which Adolphus replied,—

"Philosophy is necessary madam whether we travel or not; but I believe it is better found in the book of nature than the book of art at any period of our lives."

A deep sigh followed the remark: why the fair Isabella should have responded to this sigh we cannot tell, but she certainly did; and her cheeks were crimsoned with blushes when Edmund exclaimed,—

I protest Adolphus, I shall, when I lose the pleasure of your society, regret that my little cottage is not

nearer the Priory; and shall positively envy Sir Mildred the happiness from which your poor Edmund will be excluded. Isabella too will be sorry to part with her little favourite Sambo."

"Which it is my intention to restore to his mistress. I have indeed no longer a wish to retain Sambo in my service," cried Adolphus.

And Miss Montgomery replied,—

"O fie Mr. Walsingham, then why did you betray him into your service, and seduce him from the affections of his mistress.

"I did not betray him madam, he followed me into voluntary exile;" uttered Adolphus with something like embarrassment at the remark just made.

"Ah! then you are still more unkind" said Miss Montgomery, "to desert him when he has given you such a proof of attachment and fidelity. It is well you do not act thus with your friends; they would not thank you much for the compliment."

There was something peculiarly marked in the manner of Miss Montgomery as she uttered these words, which, accompanied by one of the most melodious voices in the world, rendered her particularly interesting at this moment to her auditors. And looking intently on her beautiful countenance, Adolphus replied,—

"I hope Miss Montgomery would not be one of my fair friends who would have the cruelty to tax me with ingratitude towards her."

"I do not know what I should tax you with were I like Sambo," answered she, a rosy blush mounting to her fair cheek, "but I have not followed you into voluntary exile Mr. Walsingham."

"Then madam, for your sake, I will not relinquish Sambo," cried Adolphus, thus suddenly betrayed into more warmth than he was aware of for the lovely pleader of his dumb and faithful companion. "He shall retain his service with his master, for her who has condescended to become an advocate in his behalf."

Miss Montgomery blushed a still deeper red. She averted her head from the quick and transient glance of Adolphus, and the keen and penetrating gaze of Edmund Austincourt; but as she did so, a half-stifled and involuntary sigh escaped from the confines of her snowy breast, while she falteringly pronounced.—

"Ah! Mr. Walsingham, I have no doubt but poor little Sambo will find much better friends when he arrives at Austincourt Priory than those he leaves behind him in the village of Pennington; and more powerful advocates to plead his cause than Isabella Montgomery."

To which Adolphus replied as he patted Sambo on the head,—

"That, madam, I feel at this moment to be utterly impossible. There are circumstances, existing circumstances Miss Montgomery, which renders your conclusion on that subject doubtful."

A pause ensued which was not interrupted on either side, and Adolphus took the opportunity of retiring to his chamber to arrange some necessary articles of his wardrobe preparatory to his intended departure the ensuing morning; having, by the express desire of Edmund, postponed his departure until that time; but which, in consequence of a letter received from his uncle Sir Mildred, requesting that he would set out with all imaginable despatch for the Priory, could be

no longer unnecessarily delayed. The letter concluded in the following manner.

“ Your tardiness in coming my beloved nephew gives me pain, and inclines me to be somewhat envious of the happiness of my son Edmund, who appears to have more influence over your affections than his father. Not that I would infer that Edmund does not truly merit your regard, or is not every way worthy of your confidence; I know that he is so; and was always your firmly attached friend when others less deserving than him were your avowed enemies. But the subject is distressing, and therefore we will drop it. Let your immediate presence dispel all doubts and fears that you are not equally anxious to behold me as I am impatient to embrace and welcome my nephew. By the by, though I have not said a word about a certain lovely young lady, yet you may guess very well whom I mean. She is as beautiful as ever, but—but—I wish there was no such word as *but* in the English language—but the truth will out—I do not think that her voyage to Italy has improved her. I have an aversion to Italian manners—I have an aversion to Italian women—and I have an aversion, a most unconquerable one to all Italian men—and this being the case, you cannot wonder that I do not think my little Theodora improved by her visit to the land of signiors. Not but that she is still a lovely creature. But come my dear boy and judge for yourself in this particular. No more delay. Tell Edmund at his peril to detain you a prisoner any longer—not a day—not an hour after you receive this from

“ Your very sincerely affectionate uncle,

“ MILDRED FREDERIC AUSTINCOURT.”

No sooner had Adolphus perused Sir Mildred's letter than he flew into the apartment of Edmund exclaiming—

“ I have now nothing to plead against my immediate departure for the Priory. Look my dear Edmund, what can I say to this affectionate appeal from the heart of my worthy uncle? Ought not his commands to be imperatively obeyed, when affection counts each moment of my stay. Read dearest Edmund, and tell me if I should not be the veriest knave in existence if I did not fly on the wings of duty and affection towards him. Do but observe too what Sir Mildred has said respecting lady Theodora. Ah Edmund! what a falling off is here. My uncle always thought her an angel; but I am convinced, although his expressions are extremely guarded, that he does not think her so still.”

“ We must suspend our judgment till a future opportunity,” mildly replied Edmund, after having slightly glanced over the contents of Sir Mildred's letter, “ for whatever be the mystery, which, at present, involves the fair Theodora, I cannot but consider that my father is in some way or other a party concerned: though in what manner he has acquired the secret confidence of Theodora is to me a matter of astonishment: and I am lost in perplexity and doubts when I reflect on circumstances so singular.”

Edmund having some duty to attend now apologized to his cousin that he could not join him till the hour of dinner; which apology was most cordially accepted by Adolphus, who replied—

“ O I shall find sufficient employment on my hands I promise you. I will immediately set down and answer Sir Mildred's letter in the kindest manner pos-

sible; after which, I will do myself the honor of accompanying Miss Montgomery in a walk to Pennington Abbey." Adolphus paused, and his complexion reddened on perceiving a playful smile exhibited on the countenance of Edmund, and he added, "that is, if Miss Montgomery will herself accept of me for a companion."

Edmund now laughed heartily, while he uttered,—

"On my word Dolphy, if you are fishing for a compliment you shall not have one; because I dare say you are perfectly aware of the mischief you have already done in a certain quarter; though you know I had penetration enough to discover that long ago. I always told you that Isabella Montgomery loved you."

"Isabella Montgomery love me!" Why good heavens Edmund! you cannot suppose me so insufferably vain as to imagine such a ridiculous idea, do you?" cried Adolphus.

But Edmund was already out of the hearing of Adolphus; who, in retiring for a few minutes to his chamber, for the purpose of replying to Sir Mildred's letter, began to reflect on the words of Edmund more seriously than he thought there was a necessity for respecting Miss Montgomery; towards whom he had never shewn the slightest attention which could warrant a supposition that his heart beat with any sentiment warmer than friendship; consequently could not consider himself the cause of any uneasiness which she might feel on his account. But had Adolphus actually been possessed of that vanity and self-presumption which is inherent in at least two-thirds of mankind, he might easily have discovered the influence he had obtained in the heart of the lovely Isabella at an earlier

date than the present: for oft in the youthful dance on the merry light fantastic toe, or when the mirthful song went round in happy jollity, with her youthful companions Isabella has vaunted of the graceful accomplishments of Adolphus Walsingham: and sighed and sickened with disappointment at the preference which was always given to her more fortunate rival lady Theodora Percy in all the festivities which were commemorated either at Austincourt Priory, or at their own magnificent mansion. And once when her sister Julia had been dancing with Adolphus the tearful Isabella exclaimed,—

“ Ah Julia! how happy you have been this evening in being selected by Adolphus Walsingham for a partner in the dance.”

To which the lovely Julia with a playful smile replied:

“ Well Bella and had not you Mr. Frederic Austincourt, who was the best dancer, and what is more, is reckoned the handsomest and most accomplished young gentleman in the whole assembly?”

“ Of this Julia I am certain,” retorted Isabella “ that he was the most proud and the most vain. Ah! how unlike his amiable cousin the ever charming Adolphus.”

“ Beware sister, beware of love,” cried the laughing Julia as they separated to go to their several occupations. But the words of the gentle Julia were prophetic even at this period of their almost infantine days; for Isabella Montgomery cherished in her bosom the first dawning of passion for Adolphus Walsingham; though unconscious herself of the invidious attacks of the sly urchin.

Nor was it till long after the departure of Adolphus from Austincourt Priory that Miss Montgomery, in a warm debate with lady Austincourt and her malicious daughters, discovered the true nature of her sentiments towards the poor wronged banished Orphan Boy. It was then the timid apprehensive maid recoiled even from the knowledge of her own heart; and blushed and sighed she knew not why when suddenly the name of Adolphus was ever pronounced in her hearing. But her sister Julia (then on the eve of being united in marriage to her beloved Edmund) soon discovered the state of the lovely Isabella's heart, and exhorted her in language the most moving, tender, and affectionate to conquer, by every means in her power, this hopeless and misplaced attachment,— •

“ Which must inevitably end in the most cruel disappointment my beloved sister,” cried the tearful Julia, “ what good can possibly result from your cherishing a regard for Adolphus Walsingham, now the object of disgrace probably, but, at all events, he is certainly the object of displeasure to his uncle Sir Mildred Austincourt, from whose protection he is now ultimately driven, and in whose presence he dare not again come till he has exonerated himself from the base suspicion he has incurred of being accessory to the seduction of poor Fanny Roseberry.”

“ And do you suppose Julia that I believe Adolphus to have had any thing to do with that unfortunate affair?” cried Miss Montgomery, “ no indeed, my heart assures me that he is the most wronged and injured of human beings. Nor do I require any other test of his innocence than the malicious and slanderous tongues of his enemies, who would impeach his fair



fame that their own characters may appear faultless. As to Fanny Roseberry, she is a very base young woman not to give up to justice her betrayer ; the concealing of whose name, in my mind, adds greatly to the nature of her indiscretion."

" I will not pretend to deny that Fanny was extremely reprehensible in this particular," retorted the amiable Julia, " it might have saved a world of pains, doubts, and perplexities, which now are involved in mystery."

" Saved !" exclaimed Miss Montgomery, " Ah Julia ! would it not have saved Adolphus, and restored him to the protection of his uncle, from whom he is now banished ? Injurious girl ! she has betrayed him !"

" Well but dear Bella, what has this to do with your love for Adolphus Walsingham ?" asked Julia.

To which Miss Montgomery replied,—

" Much sister, more than you can imagine. If Adolphus had not been so unfortunate, perhaps he would have been an object of indifference to me. It is his misfortunes which gives him a claim to my compassion ; and it is his sufferings which have softened my heart !"

The lovely Julia entwining her arms affectionately around her sister's neck playfully exclaimed—

" Ah dear dear Bella ! these excuses my love will not avail ! you love Adolphus, and it is in vain to attempt to hide the secret of your heart. However, never more will I impose a task so painful to your feelings. All that I would now add for the safety and happiness of my dear sister is, that, to another individual, this secret may never be disclosed : in the heart of your faithful Julia it reposes for ever."

In one word, Mrs. Edmund Austincourt kept the secret of her beloved sister to the day of her death. So that Miss Montgomery had no opportunity of conversing with any person on the subject of her secret passion till the day her eyes had suddenly encountered him at the door of Edmund Austincourt. And the result of such an interview on the surprised and agitated feeling of this lovely girl may naturally be conceived, when she contemplated, in addition to the improvement which time had effected on the fine person of Adolphus, the superior graces of his now accomplished mind; on a discovery of which it was scarcely to be expected that the heart of Isabella would less fondly admire her long adored favorite; much less could she conceal sensations which painfully throbbed at her heart; for she feared that Adolphus, restored to the protection and good opinion of his uncle, would now aspire to the hand of her so greatly envied rival lady Theodora Percy. Isabella had long been no stranger to the ardent admiration with which the charms of this young lady were regarded by Adolphus, though circumstances had never permitted him publicly to avow it; and the only consolation that she now derived from the heart-wounding pangs of love and jealousy was, the supposed unworthiness of the character of her beautiful rival; which, under existing appearances, made it morally improbable that Adolphus would now sue for the honor of her hand.

While these reflections were passing in the agitated bosom of Miss Montgomery, the unconscious object of her fond and anxious solicitude having finished his letter to his uncle was about to enter the apartment which she usually occupied to make an offer of his

services, while time permitted him, to accompany her in a walk to Pennington Abbey. But, on his entrance, he discovered that the fair inhabitant was flown. Her port-folio lay open on the table; she had been writing, and an unfinished composition, which, for some cause, she appeared suddenly to have quitted, caught his observation, and insensibly and powerfully attracted and excited his curiosity, for men can be curious as well as women. They were lines addressed to "Henry," and commenced in the following manner:—

Near Henry's cot a bird was perched high,  
Which Emma watched beneath her downcast eye.  
And when he raised his trembling notes so sweet,  
Her virgin breast with soft emotions beat.  
Henry she loved; but delicate the flame,  
To mortal never yet had told his name;  
Tho' with her tears the murmuring waters fell,  
And whispering winds her gentle sighs could tell.  
'Twas break of morn; unconscious Henry slept;  
While Emma ever watchful, Emma wept.  
The tuneful bird as if to heal her pain,  
Sung o'er his wild and plaintive notes again.  
'Oh cease!' she cried, 'of love, oh! cease to sing,  
'Or lend me gentle bird thy downy wing;  
'Since hopeless love alas! is Emma's fate,  
'Oh! let me fly from him I cannot hate!'

No other proof was now necessary to convince our Orphan Boy that the fair Isabella had imbibed and cherished in her bosom a hopeless and unconquerable passion for an object whose affections she despaired of ever possessing; and that object, there was no longer a possibility of doubting, was himself. The alternate blush; the involuntary sigh; and the silent, but expres-

sive down cast timid looks of the fair Isabella, had too frequently proclaimed it; and Adolphus now heartily repented that he had not immediately set out for Austin-court Priory on his arrival at Pennington, and thus have escaped the painful sensations which he now experienced, in being the cause of unhappiness to an amiable female; whom, however lovely, attractive, or praiseworthy, he felt, had not the influence of inspiring in his bosom a more glowing sentiment than that of friendship and esteem. And he now deemed himself the most unfortunate of human beings in having a second time inspired a passion he could not return; and the idea of the lovely Mary presenting itself to his imagination he mentally exclaimed,—

“ If indeed this insensate heart could ever beat warm with love again after the cruel wound that Theodora has inflicted, to thee Mary, and thee alone, that heart should be eternally devoted; not only in gratitude to thee dear Leonard, brother of my heart; but because I acknowledge the worth, and respect the virtues of thy gentle sister, the inestimable unassuming Mary.”

Adolphus by no means willing, from a sense of honor and delicacy, that Miss Montgomery should entertain the slightest suspicion of his having discovered the secret of her heart, now hastily retreated towards the door in the expectation of seeing her approach. And he was not deceived; in a few moments Isabella appeared; and Adolphus, not choosing to notice the evident and painful embarrassment she betrayed, immediately apologized for his intrusion, requesting, that, if not particularly engaged, she would honor him with her company in a walk to inspect the beautiful

and magnificent ruins of Pennington Abbey.

"You honor me most highly sir," cried Miss Montgomery, "in supposing that I possess a taste so congenial with your own."

Adolphus was silent and confused; he knew not what reply to make to the beautiful speaker; and on pretence of looking at his watch, gave Miss Montgomery no expectation that he was going to return the elegant compliment she had conferred. And the fair Isabella looked mortified and disappointed in the extreme when Adolphus reminded her that there was no time to lose, offering her his arm at the same moment.

"I see you are already provided with your scarf and bonnet," cried he, "there is no necessity to return to dress, so come along *ma belle amie*; and they immediately proceeded to the abbey from whence

"The curfew toll'd the knell of parting day"

to many a weary and contemplative traveller on the distant hills; the sound of which, though melancholy, was often welcome to the ear; and where the "ivy mantled tower" was still perceptible through the ravages of "hoary headed time."

As they approached the grand entrance of this once splendid and magnificent structure, now a dreary mausoleum for the dead, the decayed monuments of whose tombs lay scattered in fragments on the broken pavement, Adolphus could not help feeling an awful and impressive conviction of the uncertainty of all human expectations, and of all ambitious and aspiring views when formed 'on the visionary pomps and idle vanities of man's inconstant mind; and he exclaimed

in the words of Pope as he mournfully surveyed the huge and massy piles all decayed and mouldering into dust—

“ Oh sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise  
“ By mountains pil’d on mountains to the skies?  
“ Heaven still with laughter the vain toil surveys,  
“ And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.—  
“ Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,  
“ Is but the more a fool, or more a knave!”

“ Ah! you must not be a severe censurist Mr. Walsingham,” cried Miss Montgomery, “ every man has some passion; it is the necessary consequence you will reasonably allow of mortality; and though ambition is in some instances a vice, yet, it is nevertheless, the basis of many virtues.”

“ I do not deny the assertion Miss Montgomery,” answered Adolphus, as he conducted her to the interior part of the abbey, in which reposed the ashes of departed warriors and illustrious heroes, not a vestige of whose names were now left to record “ to whom related or by whom begot,” but all were buried in the promiscuous heap. At length Miss Montgomery stopped and pointed out to the observation of Adolphus a plain and unadorned monument, part of which remained in a state of preservation. It was supported by a group of angels, who appeared in the act of bearing a female form from a transitory abode to an immortal one; and the countenance of the woman was still uncommonly beautiful and expressive: and “ To the memory of Robertina, only child of the duke de Rivers” was very plain to be distinguished, but the under lines were entirely defaced.

“ Here probably was the only hope of the heart of a fond parent snatched suddenly away by the immediate messenger of death!” exclaimed Miss Montgomery. “ Do but observe Mr. Walsingham the extreme beauty of that countenance; how young, how lovely when living must have been its original.”

“ And is she less lovely in that land of spirits to which it has pleased heaven to summons her?” uttered Adolphus. “ Ah! no, dear Isabella, no: the years which have passed away are but as things that have only an ideal existence in the memory it is true, but still they may cause the eye to stream with tears, and the fond and faithful bosom to heave with the sigh of regret. The loveliness that has sunk into the grave, is still lovely in the mind; and in that form which virtue inhabited, death cannot be lasting oblivion. For what but goodness pure and holy can convert the mortal into the immortal, and the dying into the ever-living.”

As Adolphus uttered words so affecting and impressive, his noble, ingenuous, and fine manly countenance bore testimony of what was passing in his heart; and never was a moment so ill calculated for concealment of the high admiration with which Isabella regarded him as the present; and a sudden thought passing her that, perhaps it was the last time she was ever destined to converse with Adolphus alone and in the delightful interchange of each others thoughts; she complained of fatigue as a pretext for her heart-wounding reflection, which she found too intolerable to support, and attempting to force a faint smile, burst into an agony of tears, to the no small surprise and astonishment of Adolphus, who, gently supporting her

to one of the gothic fragments, uttered in a voice peculiarly kind,—

“ The damp vapour of the abbey, together with the sombre prospects we have been surveying, have been injurious both to your health and feelings Miss Montgomery ; let us instantly return home I beseech you. I should have thought of this before I conducted you through the tombs ! for even I, who am robust and strong, am not proof against the chilling cold air of the abbey. Come dear Isabella, lean on my arm, and let us proceed homewards.”

Miss Montgomery made the strongest effort possible to recover her composure ; and though the words “ dear Isabella ” from the mouth of Walsingham vibrated on her heart, yet conscious of the weakness of that heart, she now endeavoured to stifle all its anxious and fond solicitude in the presence of that object who occasioned its disquietude, lest in discovering that weakness, Adolphus might first condemn and then despise her. For she had often heard him say, that he could never regard that female, who unsolicited, would openly avow an attachment to one of the opposite sex. She therefore softly exclaimed as she took his proffered arm,—

“ I am much better now I thank you Mr. Walsingham ; the fresh air has revived me. Indeed I was led into the most gloomy retrospections as I surveyed the awful mansions of the dead while I remained in the abbey, in which the remembrance of my dear lamented sister Julia had no small share. Then your observations on departed worth and beauty were so appropriate to my lovely sister, that——that”——

“ I will positively not permit you to indulge in any



more such reflections dear Isabella" cried Adolphus respectfully raising her hand to his lips.

In a few minutes they beheld Edmund coming towards them. He had observed the action of Adolphus and the blush of Miss Montgomery, and knew not what to surmise from circumstances so favorable for the hopes and expectations of the lovely Isabella, and he exclaimed,—

"Upon my word I did not know whether it might not have been your intention to dine in the ruins of the abbey, and have just stole forth to ask you. Are you aware of the lateness of the hour Miss Montgomery? and you Mr. Walsingham? A couple of pretty truants I must confess, to keep me waiting here three whole hours for my dinner, while you are quietly and deliberately surveying the ruins of an old abbey."

Miss Montgomery gently removing her arm from that of Adolphus on which she had rested, with a rosy blush instantly disappeared to divest herself of her scarf and bonnet, as she told Edmund, who smiled and excused her. But it was more for a pretext to endeavour to hide, and partly to recover from, the effects of her morning's ramble with Adolphus, which had so completely agitated and subdued her feelings. It was not the abbey, nor what she had seen at the abbey, that would have had the influence of so powerfully discomposing her; but the look, the manner, the never to be forgotten and impressive manner of Adolphus, which had excited such tender emotions, and rooted more firmly and deeply than ever his chains around her heart.

Meanwhile Edmund had not failed to rally Adolphus on the protracted stay he had made with Miss

Montgomery in the old abbey; and Adolphus alternately smiled and looked grave but remained silent. From whence it was impossible for Edmund to draw any inference likely to produce a sentiment of more than respect and friendly regard for the absent Isabella; who appeared at dinner with no small traces of agitation on her lovely countenance, notwithstanding that the attentions of Adolphus were more than usually directed towards her.

At length the chaise which was to convey Adolphus to Austincourt Priory appeared at the door of Edmund's habitation, and the tears of Miss Montgomery could no longer be restrained as he respectfully approached to bid her farewell.

"Adieu Mr. Walsingham," sobbed out she, "and may every blessing attend you at Austincourt Priory; amidst which, permit me to cherish a hope that you will sometimes bestow a thought on your absent friends at Pennington."

"And can Isabella doubt it, or that I shall not be most anxious speedily to visit them again?" exclaimed Adolphus, pressing the trembling hand which was offered to him with peculiar tenderness and delicacy as he jumped into the chaise. Edmund, who had retained his station at the door, made him repeat his promise of keeping up a regular correspondence as soon as he should arrive at Austincourt Priory.

## CHAPTER L.

Adolphus in his journey to the Priory met with little interruption. The horses were spirited ; and the postillions skilful and expert drivers. And as he caught a distant view of the beautiful old oaks which shaded the noble mansion of Sir Mildred Austincourt, beneath whose spreading branches he had passed many of his happiest hours with his beloved Edmund, and shared in the caresses of his then most kind and affectionate uncle ; where also his youthful heart first imbibed love's soft passion in its purest state for the lovely and innocent Theodora, his bosom swelled with a tide of the most tumultuous and painful sensations ; and that Theodora probably was no longer worthy of that love, made him experience a thousand indescribable pangs, which he found it a difficult matter to suppress as he approached to the residence of his beloved uncle, to whose embraces he was shortly to have the happiness of again being restored with an increase of affection, of fortune, and bright unsullied fame, which no foul slander, or malicious rumours, could now tarnish or dishonor. And though Adolphus felt grateful that such were his present smiling prospects on his return to his native land, yet his heart sustained an almost insupportable load, which he in vain endeavoured to shake off.

When the chaise suddenly stopped at the entrance of the well-known avenue, the loud ringing soon brought the porter to open the gates, which now flew wide

open to receive him; and all the domestics rushed forward and instantly surrounded the chaise with loud huzzas and the most joyful congratulations. And they bore Adolphus in triumph to the fond arms of his expectant uncle amidst a thousand endearing attentions and welcomes.

The scene that ensued was most affecting. Adolphus flew into the outstretched arms of Sir Mildred, who no sooner pronounced—"Welcome dear boy once more to these old arms! My poor wronged nephew, oh! welcome!"—than wholly subdued by his emotions he fell back in his chair and burst into tears. While Adolphus, scarcely less affected than his venerable relative, bent on his knee towards him, and pressing his hand to his lips exclaimed,—

"Ever dear, ever honoured uncle, I conjure you from this moment to banish all painful retrospections; all of which, at the sight of you, fades on my recollection. My wrongs!—do not mention them: I am restored to your affection, I am reinstated in your good opinion, which I prized dearer than my existence, and they are forgotten all. Permit me to say that I will never suffer you to repeat them."

Sir Mildred had now become more composed; he had relieved his full heart, and again straining Adolphus to his breast, while, with a look of unutterable fondness he surveyed the manly graces of his improved form and features, he uttered,—

"Yes, I am not mistaken, you are still the pride and the darling of your uncle's heart. Heaven has stamped on that countenance the most noble lineaments of man. How could I be persuaded to think my boy

otherwise!" and a tear again started in Sir Mildred's eye.

"Ah my dear uncle! why will you thus persist to wound my feelings and to pain your own?" cried Adolphus.

Sir Mildred pressed the hand of Adolphus, and was silent on the subject on which he had imposed restraint, but was communicative on every other, except that the name of Theodora was mentioned with great circumspection by him, and he carelessly observed,—

"I don't doubt but you are anxious to see lady Theodora; it is very natural; you were children and playmates together you know. But we will go and surprise her in the nursery: I will be sworn she is tending her young"——

Here Sir Mildred seemed unwilling to proceed, probably from some extraordinary emotion, which, he at that moment, discovered in the countenance of his nephew. And Adolphus equally unwilling to impress his uncle with an idea that Edmund had been at all communicative respecting lady Theodora, immediately exclaimed—

"Lady Theodora is then as passionately fond of flowers as ever; and, as you observe sir, were we now to steal upon her, should probably find her engaged in the nursery with her young plants: some of which, I presume, she has brought with her from foreign climes, and are therefore considered more precious."

"Yes, my dear boy, she certainly has brought something with her from foreign climes," cried Sir Mildred with an evidently suppressed sigh, "but you can have no possible idea what that something is if Edmund has

not told you. It is an exotic of rather an extraordinary kind I promise you; and one you will least expect to see in the care of lady Theodora Percy."

To which Adolphus replied, but not without betraying a degree of agitation of which he was perfectly ashamed in the immediate presence of his uncle.

"Indeed sir! you prepare me to behold some extraordinary novelty in the possession of her ladyship. Certainly I cannot for a moment doubt but it is an object equally worthy of her taste and observation." And Adolphus added with a sigh, "Theodora must be much changed if either her taste, or her judgment, has become vitiated."

"Theodora is changed then, take my word for it," cried Sir Mildred. "I told you that Italy had not improved her. However, my dear boy, don't let me frighten you; there is no lover in the way that I know of."

Adolphus now blushed a colour of the deepest dye while he answered—

"And if there was, Sir, it would be a matter of no moment to me, my heart is perfectly free from the charms of lady Theodora Percy."

Sir Mildred smiled—

"Ah! you do not know her powers of enchantment," cried he, "she is a complete Circe with the beauty of a Venus, to be plain with you, Dolphy, Theodora is—Oh! that cursed Italy—but I shall say no more—egad and now I look at you, I begin to think I have said too much already."

"You have said nothing, my dear uncle, that can at all concern me," cried Adolphus, his countenance contradicting his assertion, to the no small amazement

of Sir Mildred, who had always suspected the passion that Adolphus had secretly cherished in his breast for the beautiful heiress, and he could not now account for his pretended apathy towards her.

At length their conversation took another turn, and the virtues of the Morrison family became the topic on which Adolphus dwelt so warmly, that Sir Mildred smiled and exclaimed—

“It is all very true, they are a most charming family; they protected you when your own relatives turned their backs on you. I confess that you are bound in gratitude to respect them, and to do them the most signal service in your power. There is Miss Morrison too, a lovely creature; only a little too apt to faint when the name of a certain person is mentioned in her presence! You understand me, Dolphy, Miss Mary Morrison is a very pretty girl; and my nephew is a very fine young man, and I should not wonder if you have both fallen in love with one another.”

To which Adolphus replied—

“I have a high respect for Mary Morrison sir, exclusive of her being the daughter of my benefactor and the sister of my friend; but as to love, that is, the love which so highly partakes of romance and ideal and imaginary happiness, which is all concentrated in one being, without whom we feel existence to be a burthen, why I certainly do not feel any thing of that kind for Mary Morrison.”

“No, nor I should hope for any one else,” cried Sir Mildred, “because, my dear boy, if Mary Morrison is not worthy of inspiring it, I do not know who is. By the bye, how do you like Bella Montgomery? I

suppose Edmund has prevailed on her to live at Pennington since the death of his poor Julia. You see my dear boy there was a heavy affliction suspended over the head of poor Edmund by the loss of such a woman : for all who had ever known Julia must have acknowledged her superior virtues as a daughter, and her exemplary conduct afterwards as a wife. Yet she was snatched away in one short, in one little hour from the arms of her fond adoring husband! Poor Edmund! my heart bled for his sufferings !”

“ True sir, but he bore them with the philosophy of a man and the fortitude of a christian!” cried Adolphus. “ Never shall I forget the lesson he taught me of submission and of patience.”

“ Well, well, I am happy to hear it;” cried Sir Mildred, and hope that Bella and him will shortly visit the Priory and add to the happiness of our present society. Meanwhile you shall give me a long history of your adventures; and tell me tales about Scotland.”

“ Ah! my dear uncie! and they are tales of which I shall never be weary,” exclaimed Adolphus.

“ Well, and I will own to you that, when I was a boy,” returned Sir Mildred, “ I have with the most glowing affection admired the natives of that romantic region; where the spirits of departed warriors still speak in the winds, swim upon the clouds, or gleam upon the mountains”.

“ And where adversity sir,” uttered Adolphus, “ attracts more regard than the smiles of fortune; where the houseless have a home; and the friendless never want a friend. Peace to the inhabitants of such a clime; for such I found them. Brave sons of Caledo-



nia! may every blessing crown thy land of ‘ bannocks and of barley meal.’ ”

“ Amen to that same prayer,” ejaculated Sir Mildred.”

At that moment Sambo frisked into the room, betraying no small symptoms of satisfaction, by shaking his ears, and looking wistfully in the face of his master, after which, he ran to the door through which he had made his entrance, and there squatted himself down, as if he was in the expectation of a visitor. At length Adolphus exclaimed,—

“ What can this animal mean?”

“ The meaning is plain :” answered Sir Mildred, “ if the little creature had the gift of speech. Observe his anxiety. He wishes to apprise us that there is some one approaching at whose arrival he tells you he is rejoicing, and is desirous of your being so too. Can any thing be more intelligent? Open the door my dear boy and let us see who the intruder is.”

Adolphus obeyed the commands of his uncle with a trembling hand :—the door yielded to his touch ;—and as it unclosed, the first object that presented itself was the lovely lady Theodora Percy.

## CHAPTER LI.

It is not in every instance that a beautiful and fascinating exterior is the index to as pure and faultless a mind. Alas ! no : our expectations are too frequently deceived. Yet had Lavater been present at the opening of the door, when Adolphus turned to survey the beautiful intruder whom he had given entrance to in the form of lady Theodora Percy, he would have pronounced that, on such a countenance, heaven had stamped the loveliest and most indelible impressions of angelic purity by which it was impossible to have been mistaken, when turning to Adolphus at the same instant that she involuntarily stretched forth a hand white as the downy plumage of the snowy dove, she exclaimed with the most fascinating sweetness,—

“ I heard of your arrival Mr. Walsingham, and am rude enough to come to the Priory an uninvited guest on purpose to have the unspeakable happiness of welcoming you on your return to your native country, and to congratulate Sir Mildred on so joyful and happy an event.”

“ And truly if your ladyship had contrived to have been five minutes later,” cried Sir Mildred, “ it was our intention to have surprised you by walking over to Heath Cottage, instead of your stealing a sly march upon us.”

“ Well I can only thank you for the honor you intended me,” said lady Theodora, seating herself in a chair without ceremony exactly opposite to that occupied by

Adolphus, who had yet pronounced but three words in return for the cordial salutation given him by lady Theodora, and they were "I thank your ladyship" uttered in a voice of such formal constraint and chilling apathy, that, it was scarcely possible they could fail of producing the desired effect in such a bosom as Theodora's; whose every pulse was animated with the glow of the most tender and touching sensibility; and the unkind and unexpected frigidity of Adolphus sunk deep into her heart, and chilled her inmost soul. Theodora, perhaps wholly unconscious that she had merited it, was not wanting in the inclination she now felt of returning it with that degree of offended pride, which, notwithstanding the extreme softness and sensibility of her disposition, she inherited from her father. She could not easily brook disdain in the form of any object towards whom her affectionate heart had ever beat warm with sympathy and her judgment had approved; but though the manner of Adolphus was such as in any person to have excited the deepest and most lasting sense of resentment and even disgust, yet in lady Theodora it occasioned sensations of the most heart-wounding regret; and an anguish which was almost insupportable. But as there was an absolute necessity for its concealment, she summoned up all the resolution she was mistress of, and directed her conversation, for the remainder of her short visit, to Sir Mildred, throwing as much gayety and non-chalance into her manner as she found it necessary to assume under existing circumstances; so that altogether, she appeared highly ridiculous to Sir Mildred, and very far from amiable to Adolphus. For when a grave subject was started, she indulged in an immo-

derate fit of laughter ; and when really mirthful conversation was pursued, she suddenly affected gravity : not glancing once towards Adolphus till she arose to depart ; and then running to Sir Mildred she affected a hidden laugh and told him that, the next time she paid him a visit she hoped he would be in a better humour, or that he would provide something more agreeably entertaining for her amusement, and preserve her from falling into a fit of the vapours,—

“ For positively,” continued she, carelessly twisting an elegant scarf round her beautiful figure in folds that only made its loveliness the more perceptible to the admiring eye, “ I have been ready to expire with *ennui* for more than three quarters of an hour, which is precisely the time that I have been here. You have been so interesting Sir Mildred, and——and”——

Here Lady Theodora absolutely forced all the spirit she could muster into her lovely and bewitching countenance already crimsoned with blushes of offended pride, while she insidiously stole a look at the petrified and amazed Adolphus,—

“ And your nephew,” uttered she, retreating with affected paces towards the door, “ your nephew Sir Mildred has been so highly amusing that, I positively shall feel quite impatient till I take an early opportunity of again profiting by his intelligent and pleasing powers of social converse. Good morning to you gentlemen, I shall be quite in despair if I don’t see you shortly to enjoy your lively and agreeable chit-chat:—adieu :—no ceremony Sir Mildred—I can find my way down stairs without the smallest inconvenience ; and I can brush over your park as lightly as the gossamer that makes its bed in the leaves of the parti-

coloured daisy; and cameleon-like I change as often as you please."

And before Sir Mildred had time to recover from the unexpected attack given him by lady Theodora, or the astonishment of Adolphus had in any degree subsided, her ladyship had vanished from their hearing; and in a few moments they beheld her gliding, with the swiftness of a fairy through the dark foliage of the trees; her white drapery, and light celestial blue scarf which hung loosely over her shoulders, giving to her elastic, delicate, and inexpressibly graceful shape the appearance of a sylph. Such were the proportions of her enchanting figure, that even though displeased with the levity of her manner, Sir Mildred could not avoid exclaiming,—

"There's a Circe for you! Did I not tell you that she was full of enchantment and witchery! Egad Dolphy, I hope she has not bewitched you already with her incantations! Why you are spell-bound or tongue-tied; for during the whole time that Theodora was present I never recollect hearing you utter one word."

To which Adolphus with an air of embarrassment he could not conceal replied,

"It was not necessary Sir; lady Theodora had speech enough for both of us."

"Why yes, she has rated us soundly I confess," cried Sir Mildred, "and this is Theodora Percy? Would you have given credit to it Dolphy, that she was the lovely creature so timidly shy and apprehensive, that you may remember no one durst presume to speak to her on pain of the displeasure of lady Austincourt. That foolish woman by her improper manage-

ment has entirely spoiled the girl in the same sort of way as she did her own daughters ; and you perceive that Theodora has been a very apt scholar ; to which the air of Italy has added some few embellishments that shall be nameless. She can speak fast enough now Dolphy : can she not ?”

“ And if lady Theodora does not speak more to the purpose than what I have heard her this morning Sir,” cried Adolphus, “ I shall be little inclined ever to become a listener. You prepared me indeed to find an alteration in lady Theodora Percy ; but I did not expect such a one as I have just witnessed. I am pained—I am grieved—I am shocked beyond expression to perceive a gayety in her manner so nearly bordering on levity ; and a boldness so nearly approaching to indelicacy.”

“ Well, but she is still very lovely for all that,” cried Sir Mildred. “ Did you ever behold a more beautiful creature !”

To which Adolphus answered with some degree of asperity,—

“ But I am sure my dear uncle does not think that personal charms will ever atone for mental defects, which I am sorry to see Theodora has so lately acquired ; and which, in my opinion, are like so many spots in the fair sun, dimming, if not wholly obscuring its lustre.”

“ Well, well, Dolphy, it is all very true,” uttered Sir Mildred, “ nor can I controvert arguments so moral and so just. Yet, as Theodora is so very young, and has, with all her little gayeties, an excellent heart, and a most forgiving and tender disposition, I entertain the most favorable hopes of her being suddenly

cured of all those foibles, which, at present, blindfold my nephew's eyes to the attraction of that bewitching beauty, to which he now seems so utterly insensible : and I have a shrewd guess who lady Theodora will take for her physician. In the mean time, as you are an excellent astrologer, I shall leave you to consult the planets to know who that physician may be that is to effect this change in our little Theodora. At dinner I shall have the pleasure of introducing you to a singular character. He is a poet, a bachelor, and a gentleman ; and notwithstanding all his excentricities I am pretty certain you will like him. Make haste and finish your toilet, I expect Mr. Markland at the Priory precisely at the hour of six."

With these words Adolphus and Sir Mildred retired to their respective chambers. But such were the effects of the interview which he had had with lady Theodora Percy, as to banish every other circumstance from his recollection, or render others only a secondary consideration ; and deeply did he lament that Theodora had ever possessed so powerful an influence over his heart, as to render him blind to the various perfections of such objects as Mary Morrison and Isabella Montgomery ; both of whom he now considered very far her superiors in those essential points which render the female character necessary to form the happiness of man.

It is very hard however to think ill of those whom we have once loved dearly ; and Adolphus after having calculated on all the imperfections he now discovered in lady Theodora Percy could not so easily banish her image wholly from his heart, nor deny that her loveliness of person exceeded that of every other female

(lady Glenroy alone excepted) that he had ever yet beheld; and that her voice in expression was melody itself. Yet what did this avail if he could not believe her to be equally faultless as she was fair. If he could not live to prove this, to him the charms of Theodora could be nothing; and he determined, let the sacrifice cost him the most painful restrictions, or expose him to the most dangerous trials, to be the secret inspector and faithful vigil over the future actions of Theodora, in whose supposed impropriety of conduct respecting the mysterious Antonia both himself and Edmund might still be deceived. And if mistaken in one essential point, might they not be so in others? Was Theodora to be condemned unheard? Was she not at full liberty to tell her story before he passed the irrevocable sentence on her as well as himself, that of never uniting his destiny with hers. Ought he to pronounce this till he found her really guilty? Surely not: it was unmanly, cruel, and dishonorable to cherish suspicions against the honor of a female till conviction could be obtained of indisputable guilt; and no such proofs had certainly as yet appeared to criminate the character of lady Theodora. Even the mysterious conversation which had passed between her and Antonia was not sufficient to prove the possibility of any action that might not be deemed strictly virtuous and chaste. And if Theodora was only guilty of foibles instead of vices, of those foibles might she not be cured? Certainly: and he admitted that his uncle was right in so charitable a suggestion.

But Adolphus during all these reflections forgot to ask himself why his heart was making all these excuses for the conduct of Theodora, when that heart



had only a short time before utterly renounced her. Was it then hatred or love that now prompted this close examination of his feelings? It was love my young satirist which, in spite of all thy philosophy, now prevailed; and which now whispered that Theodora was still, with all her faults, dear to thy throbbing heart!

As Adolphus found the weight of these reflections likely to possess a very powerful influence over his feelings in subduing his resentment against the beautiful culprit, who had alone inspired them, he hastened down stairs, and entered the grand saloon half an hour before the time that Sir Mildred expected to receive him; and wholly absorbed in his reflections, did not observe a stranger enter at the opposite door who had been surveying him for some moments with the most scrutinizing attention. At length Adolphus perceived him, and broke silence by apologizing in the following manner:—

“In my uncle’s absence sir, I beg you will be seated. I was not aware of your entrance, or should not have omitted my duty towards you.”

To which the stranger instantly replied,—

“My name is Markland; I am certainly no stranger to your uncle, whom I presume to be Sir Mildred Austincourt; but am most anxious to learn who you are to whom I am indebted and feel obliged for so much attention.”

“My name sir is Adolphus Walsingham,” cried our Orphan Boy with modest hesitation.

“Indeed!” cried Mr. Markland, “then you are the finest young fellow I have set my eyes on in the kingdom of Great Britain, to which I am only just return-

ed after a perilous voyage over the Atlantic. On my arrival in this country, the first inquiry I made was to know whether my old friend, companion, and school-fellow was yet living. I was directed to Austincourt Priory; to which place I set out post haste (for real friendship like real love will not brook delay), and in the space of a few hours, I had the satisfaction of being welcomed to the residence of my most dear and excellent friend Sir Mildred Austincourt. Now my dear boy you are in possession of my whole history, who I am, what I am, and for what purposes I came hither. I suppose too, you imagine I do not know any thing about you; but you are mistaken; I have heard you spoken of a thousand times by the mouth of that angel lady Theodora Percy."

"Lady Theodora Percy sir!" exclaimed Adolphus, affecting what he did not feel, an indifference, which sat very ill on his embarrassed countenance; and Mr. Markland looking at him with peculiar expression, exclaimed,—

"Yes sir, it was lady Theodora Percy in whom you found, though absent, so warm and zealous a friend. It was she who first drew the portrait of your character in such pure, artless, and fair colours that I have long been inclined to cherish the most favorable impressions towards you. Nor can you wonder Mr. Walsingham when you had such an advocate as lady Theodora in your praise. On my soul there's many a one would envy you the happiness of being ranked so highly among the list of her particular favorites."

Adolphus would have felt transported to the skies at this discovery of the real sentiments of Theodora towards him had not the idea of the mysterious Anto-

nia at that moment presented itself to his imagination, and that he also was one of her ladyship's very particular favorites, instantaneously changed the nature of all those pleasing and rapturous sensations which would otherwise have taken possession of his soul. There was a necessity however of appearing to be elated at the communication offered to him by Mr. Markland, and he answered with as much vivacity and composure as he could then muster to his aid,"—

"It is impossible to feel otherwise than highly honoured, Sir, by the good opinion of lady Theodora Percy. Habit, perhaps, has made her think better of me than I deserve, for I have been known to her ladyship since the period almost of my earliest years; but my long absence from my native country has given her but few opportunities of observing more minutely than she has yet done the faults in my disposition, which, on a nearer acquaintance, she may not be disposed to view in so favourable a light as formerly."

"Well, well, with that I have nothing to do," cried Mr. Markland, "you must settle that between yourselves. All that I know—before you arrived hither, you was high in her good graces, and it will be your own fault if you do not study to deserve them."

They were now joined by Sir Mildred, whose presence was a source of much relief to the surprised and half subdued feelings of Adolphus, who felt his heart greatly softened in resentment against the object of his affections, and yet was very unwilling to discover the state of that heart to the keen investigation of such a man as Mr. Markland. Happy, therefore, was he when he beheld his uncle enter the saloon, who seemed highly gratified and pleased at the introduc-

tion which had already taken place between his nephew and his friend Markland; and while they were farther conversing on different topics, a carriage with superb liveries, drove up to the avenue, and to the no small surprise of Adolphus, Sir Mildred exclaimed—

“There’s the dowager countess of Villeroy, her charming daughter, lady Angelina, lord Villeroy, and lady Elinor Mountsorrel. They are all my invited guests this day at the Priory to a family dinner. Marky why dont you fly to meet them?”

To which Mr. Markland dryly replied, “because Marky is much better engaged in conversing with your nephew. It is time enough to fly when I behold them here, which I never fail to do whenever I have an opportunity. I would not be compelled to sit two hours in the company of lady Mountsorrel, to escape from a journey to the Antipodes.”

“Oh! but she is the destined bride of lord Villeroy,” cried sir Mildred, “and it was a necessary etiquette to invite her whether we like her or not.”

“The bride of Villeroy!” exclaimed Mr. Markland, “you astonish me; and I would say, out of pure good will, may that destiny never be the lot of so spirited a young fellow to be consigned to the arms of such a woman. By the Lord I would prefer the life of a galley slave; What say you Mr. Walsingham?”

“I have never had the distinguished honour of seeing the lady whom you are so highly complimenting, Sir,” cried Adolphus smiling; “though I have some recollection of her late lord, who visited my uncle before I left England.”

"And you cannot have forgotten the Villeroy family," exclaimed Sir Mildred. "You remember the little smiling Angelina, when she used to honour with her presence our little rustic festivities. She is grown a prodigious fine creature, is not she Marky? and is, I think, about the age of our Theodora."

To which Mr. Markland replied—

"I do not know what her age may be, but of this I am pretty certain—she has not one tenth part of the beauty of lady Theodora Percy, nor a twentieth part of her good sense. I will venture to say this, if I do not say any more. But mum, here comes your guests; I must retire till the fatigue of the first ceremony is over. The old countess is enough to surfeit any one with her fulsome and ridiculous compliments, always out of time and out of place." Mr. Markland, without further ceremony, made his exit at an opposite door to that through which the following personages presently made their entrance :—

The dowager countess of Villeroy, leading in her hand her accomplished and beautiful daughter, lady Mountsorrel, leaning languidly on the arm of lord Villeroy, and last of all the friend and companion (or commonly called the toad-eater, for by that title she was denominated more than any other) of lady Mountsorrel, Miss Rebecca Mantle, in whose countenance there appeared a peculiar and remarkable expression of good humour, arch pleasantry, and quick lively intelligence, which seemed to speak volumes though she should never open her lips, which indeed were completely shut till they were commanded to be unclosed for the amusement of her whimsical mistress. In the figure of Rebecca there was a striking defor-

mity, the disadvantage of which would render her a complete foil when placed beside the uncommonly lovely and attractive form of lady Mountsorrel, whose every limb seemed moulded by the hand of the graces. It was owing to this very deformity that Miss Mantle was always permitted the high and distinguished honour of accompanying her lady wherever she was intimately known ; and from more formal parties, Rebecca was seldom excluded. She had a fortunate knack of pleasing every body, and her want of personal attraction was never remarked whenever she opened her lips, for her voice was melodious, particularly when exercised, as it frequently was, in consoling the sorrows of the unfortunate, and in repelling the tale of scandal whenever she heard it, and to which not even lady Mountsorrel could ever prevail on her to listen with the accustomed smiles of good humour she was wont to do on every other occasion.

Lady Mountsorrel at the demise of her lord, who left her in the possession of considerable property, was desirous of seeking a companion to pass the months of her widowhood with in her solitary retirement on the borders of Wales, and it was some time before she fixed on a female suitable to her wishes or would conform to her taste. Several candidates came to offer their services, and to answer to the advertisement as written by lady Mountsorrel, in which she expressly forebade the approach of youth and beauty. Her ladyship added a singular postscript, which excited general observation—

“No person can be admitted as a companion for lady Mountsorrel, who is not very ugly, and if deformed lady Mountsorrel will not have the slightest

objection. No one need apply under thirty years of age."

Lady Mountsorrel, however, had many applicants, notwithstanding even this prohibition, but on inspection none were deemed worthy of this high place of honour and preferment till the appearance of Rebecca Mantle with a hump upon her back, which was trifling to be sure, but quite sufficient to render her completely odious by the side of her lovely mistress. In addition to which, Rebecca wore a wig of no very pleasing colour, for it was a red one, which coming in contrast with the beautiful dark auburn tresses which fell in profusion over the snowy forehead of lady Mountsorrel, gave her companion an additional blemish, which, however, all appeared as so many charms in the eyes of lady Mountsorrel, and Rebecca was immediately selected for the enviable station for which so many competitors had sued in vain.

It was not long before she found herself completely established in the favor and good graces of her beautiful mistress, who had discovered the innumerable advantages which she every day derived from having such a quiet, ordinary, and obedient companion, and resolved that her favorite should always appear with her in public. Lady Mountsorrel immediately provided her with all such apparel and ornaments as were necessary for the occasion, and gave it out to all her numerous friends, that she was well and intimately acquainted with the family and connexions of Miss Rebecca Mantle, who were of the most respectable origin, and which had induced her, in consequence of having learned of some pecuniary embarrassments of her late father, to take the poor, distressed, and desti-

tute Rebecca into her service, nay more, to make her a companion, on the just pretence of the many amiable qualities which she possessed.

The news spread like wildfire. Lady Mountsorrel, the fair, the divine, the chaste, the beautiful, the rich, lady Mountsorrel, was the protectress of Miss Mantle, and she needed no other card of recommendation.

Neither her connexions nor her character or abilities could be reasonably doubted, when the leading star of the bright and fashionable hemisphere, lady Mountsorrel, condescended to take her by the hand.

To the countess of Villeroy Rebecca too was almost as acceptable an object, for the countess, like her intended daughter-in-law, had an utter aversion to all that was young and beautiful, except indeed to her pretty Angelina, and she invited Miss Mantle to all her parties, and was excessively polite to her on all occasions.

The next character that appears on the tapis, is the right honourable lord Villeroy, the declared lover of lady Mountsorrel; that is, he had declared himself, but she had by no means accepted of him in that character, or had considered him in that point of view; for lady Mountsorrel had many lovers, and they all possessed equal claims to her hand, while none could yet boast of having secured a place in her affections. Lord Villeroy, however, was certainly the most favoured of the happy mortals, and though it was well known that he was a gay seducer of the lovely sex, and had been the destroyer of the peace and happiness of many an amiable and virtuous female, yet he was by no means disliked by lady Mountsorrel on that account. With the countess of Villeroy her ladyship



also possessed a most powerful and magnetic influence, over whose weak mind she had gained a complete ascendancy, and had already began to take in training the young, uninformed, and lovely Angelina, in whose disposition, however, there were a few decisive points which lady Mountsorrel had in vain endeavoured to overcome, and Angelina was as unwilling to give up.

Neglected by her mother till she was nearly sixteen years of age, she had been left solely to the superintendence of a nursery governess, and had acquired her first habits of thinking in solitude, in which she was sometimes visited by her gay and volatile brother, who was the chief idol of his infatuated and weak mother. She thought of nothing but her darling son, while her neglected daughter was permitted quietly to "blush unseen, and waste her sweetness on the desert air," without any enquiry being made by the countess respecting the nature of her studies, or the progress of her accomplishments. Angelina was left solely to follow her own inclinations, as far as the nursery in an old and dreary mansion could possibly extend, in the total absence of her mother or her gay brother, who had different objects and pursuits to attend to in the metropolis, than to bestow a thought on his neglected sister at Oakly Manor; till, when the autumnal season was commencing, he proposed to his mother his annual visit to the country, which was generally for the term of six weeks, but the countess declined accompanying him, alleging as an excuse that her engagements in town would precisely take up the whole of that time, and which it was utterly impossible she could dispense with.

"Then if you are determined not to go, cried lord

Villeroy, why there is no use of any further delay in my intended plans. 'Procrastination is the thief of time.' I shall set off to-morrow morning for Oakly Manor."

"Oakly Manor," drawled out lady Villeroy, "for heaven's sake what business can you possibly have at Oakly Manor?"

To which lord Villeroy immediately replied—

"To see my sister. Perhaps your ladyship may now call to recollection that you have a daughter there."

The countess felt embarrassed, and her countenance heightened, although through a mask of Parisian rouge, while she replied—

"Oh! true, I had quite forgot Angelina, which is not at all surprising when I have so many other things to think of. So you intend going to see the poor child, do you Charles?"

At which lord Villeroy burst out into a most immoderate fit of laughter, notwithstanding the evident displeased looks of his mother, while he vociferated in no very gentle voice—

"Child! ridiculous! why Angelina is more than sixteen years of age; it is time, I think, that she emerged from the nursery, especially when your ladyship must recollect that you were a wife and a mother when you were no older than Angelina."

This was a sort of memorandum which the countess could very willingly have dispensed with, and she answered with a little pettishness—

Really Charles I cannot fatigue my memory with retrospections which dont happen to be very pleasing. You well know that I was compelled to marry your

father in obedience to the will of mine. It is what I do not like to think of, because I loved somebody else much better."

"This is an observation which it would be much pleasanter for me to hear suppressed, lady Villeroy," cried his lordship, much piqued.

To which her ladyship replied—

"Then why do you provoke me to utter unpleasing truths, Charles? why do you remind me of circumstances so extremely disagreeable?"

"I reminded you only of my sister," cried lord Villeroy, "and she is your daughter. However, lady Villeroy, to be plain with you, when I return from Oakly Manor, if I find Angelina much grown in stature, as I beheld her some months ago improved in beauty, I shall bring her with me to Portman Square."

The countess absolutely looked frightened, and she exclaimed in tremulous accents—

"Bring Angelina to Portman Square! Surely Charles you cannot intend any thing half so preposterous!"

"Yes, madam," retorted his lordship with increased petulance, "where should the daughter of the earl of Villeroy be brought to if not to Portman Square. It is the residence of her mother, and therefore the most proper to receive a daughter in. In one word, I shall bring Angelina to town whether you like it or not."

Lady Villeroy was profoundly silent; she could adduce no argument against the proposition of her son, nor reasonably declare what were her motives for wishing her daughter to remain in obscurity. Much less did she dare to act in opposition to that son whom she herself had taught the first lesson of disobedience

to his parent, namely his father ; and she, his mother, now trembled to disobey him. These were the fruits of her own indiscretion ; they were seeds of her own planting ; and if, instead of bringing forth blossoms they produced thorns, lady Villeroy could not be surprised if she felt goaded by them. It is unnecessary to say that the wishes of lord Villeroy met with no opposition from his mother ; she dared not dispute his authority. And the consequence was, that at the expiration of six weeks, the shooting season being over, lord Villeroy brought his sister to the arms of, though neither her fond nor expectant, yet certainly her greatly astonished mother ; who, in the little rustic hoiden she had not seen for two years, now beheld a beautiful young woman grown into the full loveliness of female perfection ; for, with a face and figure of a youthful Hebe, Angelina possessed a mind, which, though it had never derived the advantage of a superior education, was by nature cast in the most pure and angelic mould : and the little knowledge she had gained was useful, though not ornamental ; and Mrs. Rolins, the old lady who had the care of her, always told her she knew more than her mother did, who was bred in the school of fashionable elegance. She did not know her mother ; but she knew that mothers ought to set examples to their daughters ; and she believed that when she should be thought sufficiently old enough to leave her nursery and live under the same roof with her dear mamma, that she should find dear mamma every thing that her fond and ardent imagination had painted. Alas ! poor Angelina ! how wofully were your expectations deceived ; and your fairy dreams of promised happiness, how quickly did they fade when lady Villeroy, giving an

involuntary start at the first glance of her beautiful daughter exclaimed, as lord Villeroy led the lovely girl to a mother's embraces, in a voice of the most chilling apathy,—

“ My heaven's child, what a may.pole you are grown! and what abominable stays you have got on! Why if I suffer you to wear them much longer they will completely spoil your figure, which appears as if it would be tolerable enough. And that horrid pelisse, so short in the waist—pray child instantly take it off, and let me see what nature has done for you. Lappet assist Miss Villeroy to take off her travelling dress immediately.” Lappet instantly attended, and Angelina was almost as instantly disrobed: her mother being obliged to confess that, however faulty her stays might be, there was no fault to be found in the lovely and perfect form before her. And telling her that she was not at all contemptible, the mortified and disappointed Angelina was permitted to kiss the hand of lady Villeroy and retire to her chamber; where a shower of tears relieved the full heart of the lovely girl, and where her artless and affectionate bosom heaved the first sigh of regret, beneath the splendid and magnificent mansion of her dear mamma, in the gay and elegant vicinity of Portman Square, at leaving the quiet and peaceable society of her nursery, in the solitary neighbourhood of Oakely Manor with her old governess.

Meanwhile lord Villeroy spared no pains on the means of improving the education of his so long neglected and beautiful sister; of whose external advantages he was excessively proud, and for whom he now beheld coronets in view. And Angelina was im-

mediately transplanted from the quiet nursery to the gay regions of the drawing room, and where no art was now spared to render her a magnet of attraction. But all would not do. Angelina, however attractively lovely, failed in attracting men of fashion towards her. There was a reserve almost bordering on childish bashfulness about her from which it was almost impossible to persuade her to break through, and lord Villeroy, tired of being her preceptor, turned her over to his mother, who soon grew weary of her romantic charge. Till the divine lady Mountsorrel stepped in to aid the exhausted spirits of the disappointed countess, who exclaimed, on seeing her ladyship descend from a superb carriage followed by the silent Rebecca,—

“ Here is that divine creature lady Mountsorrel ! For heaven’s sake Angelina don’t open your mouth before her. I shall positively expire at the thought of your appearing so horridly ignorant. If her ladyship speaks to you, do not pronounce any more than merely monsyllables I beg of you.”

To which Angelina, with a peculiar archness of expression, replied,—

“ I shall certainly obey your ladyship to the veriest nicety if you wish it ; for however ignorant I may appear, I hope I shall always act consistent with my duty to my mother, by implicitly following her commands.”

At this moment lady Mountsorrel appeared, and the countess instantly advanced to meet her dear bewitching friend with the following exclamation.

“ Oh my heavens ! how rejoiced I am to see you ! my sweet delicious charming creature ! I have been lan-

guishing for the banquet of your society ever since I heard you had secluded that lovely image in retiring shades. But I see you now, adored Elinor, and I am supremely blest !

To which lady Mountsorrel with one of those inexpressibly sweet smiles which was always sure to discover an uncommonly beautiful set of teeth answered, —“ Doubt not but my emotions have been equally powerful my dear, dear lady Villeroy. I assure you I was not able to close my eyes the first night of my arrival at Belmont for thinking of our tender parting adiens, was I Mantle?”

“ No indeed, your ladyship was extremely restless,” answered the patient Rebecca.

“ And agitated, was I not Mantle?” said lady Mountsorrel.

“ Inconceivably so your ladyship” was the reply.

But as Miss Mantle glanced her eyes towards the timid, and now surprised, Angelina, she thought she could discover a suppressed smile of risibility, which, encountering at the same moment the inquiring look of Angelina, instantly changed its expression on the countenance of Miss Mantle to its usual mild and quiet contour.

And the two dear friends continued to converse in the same high-flown rhapsodies. Lady Mountsorrel protesting that the friendship of lady Villeroy was dearer to her than life itself; and lady Villeroy returning the compliment by declaring that lady Mountsorrel was the very soul of her existence. While every now and then an appeal was made to Miss Mantle for the truth of her ladyship's assertions.

The entrance of lord Villeroy put an end to the

sickening dialogue between them ; and fearing to encounter the lectures of her son, her ladyship for the first time introduced Angelina to the notice of lady Mountsorrel, who clasping her arms immediately round the neck of the lovely girl, exclaimed in a theatrical accent—

“ ‘ Is she not more fair than painting can express, or youthful poets fancy when they love ? ’ Good heavens, lady Villeroy, why did you not sooner introduce me to this lovely creature, with whom my heart tells me I shall be charmed to form a more intimate connexion.”

“ Do you know what you are saying, Elinor,” exclaimed lord Villeroy; and her ladyship blushed deeply, “ by forming an intimate connexion with my sister there is only one expedient way.”

“ And pray my lord what is that ? ” cried lady Mountsorrel, affecting not to understand him.

And his lordship instantly replied,—

“ By your becoming the wife of him who adores you.”

And her ladyship blushed considerably deeper than she had yet done; apologized that she had an early appointment to attend; and calling on Rebecca Mantle to attest it, permitted lord Villeroy to lead her to her carriage.



## CHAPTER LII.

Adolphus, totally unprepared to see the guests already described at his uncle's house, and much more astonished than pleased to discover that they had been frequent visitors at the priory during his long absence, had by no means recovered from his surprise when they made their sudden entrance into the saloon, where a formal introduction immediately took place; and he was presented by Sir Mildred to each of the parties as the so long absent and tenderly beloved nephew of whom they had heard such frequent mention. The fine figure of Adolphus, added to the manly beauty of his countenance, which received no disadvantage from the rich glow which illumined his complexion, attracted the particular observation of lady Mountsorrel so greatly, that the eyes of lord Villeroy followed her ladyship's in every direction; and he betrayed the most evident marks of displeasure, when, being seated next to Adolphus, she directed her whole attentions towards him. But this her ladyship either appeared not to notice, nor did not consider a matter of the slightest consequence. While Adolphus rather sedulously avoided, than sought for, any opportunity of rendering himself a conspicuous object with any one; and he received the compliments of lady Mountsorrel with an elegant air of good breeding; but, at the same time, it was marked with a peculiar apathy; as he turned to survey the beautiful countenance of the young and innocent Angelina, who had only slightly

courtesied to him as Sir Mildred presented him to her notice and exclaimed,—

“Come Miss Villeroy, here is an old playmate of yours. You must certainly have recognized Adolphus Walsingham when you came to the Priory to grace our rural festivities each succeeding birth-day of my hopeful sons. Don't you remember your partner in the dance?”

To which, blushing deeply, Angelina timidly answered, for she beheld the piercing glance of inquiry directed towards her by lady Mountsorrel.

“I believe I should not have recollected Mr. Walsingham, Sir Mildred, if you had not reminded me of the circumstance you alluded to.”

“Young ladies sometimes affect to have very short memories,” uttered lady Mountsorrel, “it would be singular indeed, if, having once seen Mr. Walsingham, you should have forgotten him.”

This lady Mountsorrel pronounced in a voice of the most fascinating sweetness; while she extended a beautiful hand and arm to reach something which was handed to her by Miss Mantle, who in silence received it again from her lovely mistress with a quiet, but by no means unexpressive look, as she turned her eyes on the countenance of lord Villeroy; but they were instantly withdrawn when his lordship exclaimed,—

“What are you smuggling there Mantle? Come, I can partly guess the contents of that billet-doux you received this morning.”

“Oh! for heaven's sake don't let us be bored with it now,” cried lady Mountsorrel, “some other time I beseech you.”

“Well but Elinor this is absolute cruelty,” ex-

claimed lord Villeroy, "there is no time like the present when Sir Mildred can give his advice how we are to act on so distressing an occasion. Miss Mantle have the goodness to produce the paper."

"I desire Mantle that you will keep it quietly in your possession," cried her ladyship, in a half-playful half-serious tone."

"Why this inflexibility Elinor," uttered lord Villeroy, consider the state of this unfortunate family. In short Sir Mildred, they are tenants both of lady Mountsorrel and me. They have cottages at Heathwood, and having for some time past been suffering the most abject want and penury, are incapable of discharging their rents; of which however, permit me to add, we have all been ignorant till this morning, when an application was made to Miss Mantle to deliver a petition to grant them some assistance. Now really I have no objection, provided they will immediately quit Heathwood with their wives and families, who are labouring under the influence, as I understand, of a most contagious fever."

"How deplorable!" cried Sir Mildred.

"How frightful!" exclaimed the countess.

"And how intollerably provoking," uttered lady Mountsorrel. "What is to be done with this disagreeable business? What can be done with the miserable wretches? I protest I am ready to expire at the thought of some of my domestics going near the habitations of these unhealthy people, fearful of the consequences which might ensue from infection. I hope Mantle you were very cautious when you sent the basket with some provision for the poor devils. You did not receive the basket again I hope at Mountsorrel."

To which Miss Mantle replied,—

“ Your ladyship’s commands were implicitly obeyed,” and relapsed into her usual silence.

When Sir Mildred, after a short pause thus seriously addressed them.

“ The distressing circumstance you have stated my lord shock and afflicts me beyond expression; for it is not only a private source of melancholy reflection, but may be suddenly productive of the most dreadful and general calamity even to ourselves as well as to our establishments; to remedy which, we must instantly devise the most effectual means, not only to save the lives of the poor sufferers, but to act as a preservative for our own. At the same time permit me to say, there was a shameful neglect of duty, and a most glaring want of humanity in those persons employed in your service, by not having acquainted your lordship sooner with an affair of such immediate consequence, and for which there appeared an absolute necessity, even at the commencement of the distress of these poor and unfortunate people. I will despatch my steward to your lordship to-morrow morning to see what at present we can do to relieve them: meanwhile I would recommend that medical assistance instantly be procured.”

This plan was immediately adopted by lord Villeroy, who now began to think seriously, for the first time in his life, of the sufferings of his fellow-creatures. While lady Mountsorrel became dreadfully alarmed for her own peculiar safety; and that her ladyship thought was quite sufficient; she had not time to bestow a thought on any body else. And lady Villeroy was also equally apprehensive of the contagious disease affecting either her own personal convenience

or that of her darling son. Poor Angelina was quite forgotten in her extreme terrors; and Miss Mantle having no one to think of her remained very quiet and composed in affairs so critical. Nor was the lovely Angelina very seriously alarmed. She had been taught to rely on the immediate protection and goodness of Almighty Providence, to whom she had always looked forward with hope and confidence; and under the reality of even the most perilous dangers and gloomy prospects could not easily be depressed. She thought it her duty however to console her mother the countess under the influence of her alarming apprehensions, and concluded her affectionate assurances with the following observation:—

“ Dear mamma why will you thus unnecessarily alarm yourself. It is very unlikely that the poor souls will any of them come to Avondale, which is a great distance from Heathwood; and it is very unlikely that you would see them in their present danger.”

“ I see any of them ! Oh ! the heavens forbid !” exclaimed lady Villeroy, “ I would not see a sick person for the universe. There is something so horrid and languid in their death-like countenance, that I should shudder at the sight of them. Should not you my sweetest Elinor.”

“ Oh ! I should positively faint were I to see any of the squalid miserable wretches about the neighbourhood of Heathwood,” cried lady Mountsorrel, whom the countess had so tenderly addressed. “ I have like your ladyship a natural antipathy to a sick chamber and all invalids, have not I Mantle ?”

“ Your ladyship is incontestibly right,” answered Miss Mantle.

“ But you have not Miss Mantle,” cried the artless Angelina. “ Ah ! no : I remember when the poor old forester’s wife lay ill in her cottage and nobody expected that she would recover from her dangerous disorder, that you went to see her, and was not shocked at all at her pale and ghastly appearance ; nor yet afraid when she called you to her bed-side, and you asked her if you could give her any thing to do her good, and she replied,—“ ‘ Heaven bless you, you are the only one who has asked me such a question since I have been grieved with my infirmity ; may god reward you for it.’—And you know Miss Mantle that the following morning poor old Sarah died. Ah ! Miss Mantle, you have a kind and tender heart, I am sure you have, though you won’t let any body tell you of it.”

All eyes were now turned towards the young and lovely Angelina and the silent Rebecca. She had uttered this with a warmth and energy which she was unaccustomed to do on other occasions, and her cheeks were heightened with blushes of the deepest vermillion when she perceived Mr. Markland, who had joined the party just as they sat down to dinner, regarding her with the most scrutinizing attention. While with looks of evident displeasure lady Mountsorrel exclaimed,—

“ For heaven’s sake Miss Villeroy don’t horrify us with any more stories about Mantle and her old woman. I know she has a particular propensity to all these sort of things ; but then you know they would be ridiculous in any other person.”

“ Oh perfectly so !” cried lady Villeroy. “ For instance, in lady Mountsorrel and me : it would be

highly preposterous to see us paying visits of condolence in all the straw-built cottages in the neighbourhood; administering to the wants of little sick brats and superannuated old women. Not that I blame Mantle; it is really very kind of her."

"And if you were to blame Miss Mantle for the exercise of such humanity," cried Mr. Markland, "I do not think that your ladyship's example would be a very general, or a very commendable one, to follow. I for one would not subscribe to your ladyship's opinion in that particular I assure you."

And without staying to witness what effect this speech had produced upon her ladyship's feelings he precipitately arose from his seat and quitted the room.

"Markland is the most extraordinary personage I ever knew," cried lord Villeroy, as soon as he had made his exit, "but as we are all well acquainted with the whimsicalities of his disposition, it would be folly either to mind or reflect on what he utters."

"O I never feel offended with what the creature says," exclaimed lady Mountsorrel, "for I protest at times his rudeness is positively amusing. We are always quarreling, and it keeps up a constant variety in the course of our *tete a tetes* which would grow vapid without it."

To which Sir Mildred replied,—

"And your ladyship is right: it is the best way to deal with Markland when his remarks sometimes carry him a little beyond good manners. I always laugh at him; and if we have at all differed in point of argument, we by this means become reconciled again much better than if I had professed myself offended. Notwithstanding all his oddities, I hold him to be a man of

the most sacred integrity, and consider his friendship to be invaluable."

As the evening approached and had considerably advanced before the party broke up, lord Villeroy held a long conference with Sir Mildred respecting the unfortunate families at Heathwood, which were to be supplied with every nourishment and assistance which their deplorable situations stood in need of, from persons who were to be appointed to inspect the nature of their calamities, and for whose future support Sir Mildred proposed that a liberal subscription should be made as soon as the present inconvenience had subsided.

"Well, but my dear Sir Mildred," cried lady Mountsorrel, "what is to be done about returning to the neighbourhood of Heathwood while the fever rages. I positively cannot think of living at my own residence?"

"Nor I, I am certain," cried lady Villeroy, "cannot think of going to Avondale under the apprehension of catching the dreadful contagion. I should be so afraid of Charles if he attempted to stir out."

"To avoid which it is my intention to detain you all prisoners here at Austincourt Priory," exclaimed Sir Mildred, with a cordial and benevolent smile, "it is, I think, spacious enough to hold all my guests. What say you, lord Villeroy, to such a plan? and you, my lovely widow, do you accept of my invitation?"

Lady Mountsorrel smiled bewitchingly, while she offered her sincere acknowledgments to Sir Mildred for a proposition so exactly concordant with her present feelings; the nature of which, whatever they might be, had the effect, as she glanced towards Adol-



phus, of adding the most brilliant colour to her ladyship's really beautiful complexion.

A similar return of thanks for so generous and friendly an offer was also tendered by lady Villeroy and her son, and the amusements of the evening passed off with encreasing hilarity.

Mr. Markland not being visible till the supper hour, lady Mountsorrel and lady Villeroy continued uninterrupted to enjoy the full flow of their thoughtless and unceasing volatile spirits, of which Adolphus found himself in a disposition by no means to partake; nor was the idea that the visits of his uncle's guests would now be considerably prolonged at Austincourt Priory very gratifying to his vanity or pleasing to his thoughts, as the continual interruption of such society might considerably impede the progress of his plans with lady Theodora Percy, for whom his heart still beat, though he endeavoured to stifle the flutterer with the most unconquerable affection, and for whom he now experienced the most alarming fears and torturing apprehensions; and, in a supposition that her health might be endangered by the contagious disease which had already spread its baneful and pernicious effects throughout the neighbourhood, Adolphus, when he retired to his chamber, passed a sleepless night; he wished to apprise lady Theodora of the perilous hazard she ran in taking her walks so near to Heathwood, but he knew not what pretext to make to his uncle in order that he might wait on lady Theodora in person, without seeming very solicitous about her welfare or concerns. This was no time for ceremony, however, when Theodora was the object, and as he could not enjoy any repose, he arose as soon as

the morning's light began to gleam through the windows of his chamber, and without disturbing any of the domestics, he found his way down the great staircase, and unclosing the gates of the portal, was in a few moments at the extremity of Sir Mildred's Park, and on the high road which led to the habitation of lady Theodora Percy.

It was one of those mornings when the sun seemed unwilling to yield its kindly influence to the earth ; the air was moist and chilling, and the whole temperature of the atmosphere seemed to promise the most unfavourable weather. Notwithstanding which, Adolphus felt no inclination to turn back, although he had more than three miles to go over the Heath, which was at this season of the year bare and desolate of every charm ; scarce, however, had Adolphus advanced a quarter of a mile on his journey before he discovered a female figure standing at the door of a small hut, which, after a few moments conversation with the owner, a poor old squalid woman, approaching near to seventy years of age, she suddenly quitted, and darted with the velocity of the nimble footed hind, followed by its vigilant pursuers along the borders of the wild heath. Perceiving that she had attracted the observation of Adolphus, she redoubled her pace, and would instantly have been out of sight as well as hearing, had not the large grey cloak in which she was enveloped fell off her shoulders, and disclosed to Adolphus, not the countenance of an entire stranger, but the arch, pretty, and expressive face of lady Theodora Percy, in whose fresh and roseate looks health glowed in its most beautiful and animated variety ; but who blushed extremely at being thus disrobed of

her cloak and bonnet, for the wind had blown both to the ground, and which Adolphus had been at no small pains to prevent being blown a considerable distance further ; and which having rescued from the fury of the winds, he approached and presented her with, and ventured to enquire kindly after her health—

“ Which, if I may judge from your looks, lady Theodora, is wholly free from the effects of indisposition ; but pray, pray be cautious. I came hither this morning on purpose to apprize you of the danger in which you might unwarily be led in your walks near Heathwood, the inhabitants of which are now under the influence of a most contagious disease. Do not venture there, I besecch you. Sir Mildred has endured much apprehension and anxiety on your account ; and I——lady Theodora have not been unconscious of your danger.”

Adolphus had during these few words walked some paces by the side of Theodora, in which she had employed herself by adjusting her cloak and bonnet, after which she smiled, and courtseying to Adolphus, thanked both him and Sir Mildred for their kind intentions.

“ But your caution is too late,” added she, “ I have already been more than once to visit the poor unfortunates at Heathwood ; nay, I am now only just returned from one of the infected cottages. The old woman with whom you saw me conversing, is the grandmother of four children who this morning all died of the fever.”

“ And you, you lady Theodora, have entered that cottage, exclaimed Adolphus in the most agitated and fear-struck accents ; and forgetting at that moment all resentment towards her on whom he still unutterably

doated, " you have heedlessly exposed yourself to this danger ; why, why were you so incautious?"

" To which lady Theodora immediately replied,—

" O fear not for me ; I shall take no harm ; and if I do, I shall not be the first who has suffered in the performance of my duty. For where is there a duty more indispensibly necessary than the discharge of that which is owing to the helplessness of the sick and the unfortunate."

" Granting it to be so," answered Adolphus, " and I do not say that it is not, it is by no means a necessary duty that we should neglect our own personal safety. You are under a mistake my fair friend if you suppose that Providence would exact of us such unreasonable sacrifices. But come, the wind blows cold, and the air is vapourish and damp : let me persuade you to return home immediately."

" The fond solicitude, and the impatient anxiety which softened the countenance of Adolphus as he addressed these words with an expression of kindness too marked to be mistaken in their meaning on lady Theodora were however lost, as they did not appear to make any very perceptible change ; for she relaxed into her usually sportive and playful manner towards him as she smilingly answered,—

" Well it certainly was very imprudent of me to endanger the safety of others if I had no regard for my own. I had quite forgotten objects whom it is my duty, as well as my destiny, to shield from all harm. I have the charge of a little foundling Mr. Walsingham, whom I have promised to protect ; and I would not for my existence that the sweet innocent should perish through my negligence. But why this involuntary

start of surprise? Ah! you must not tell me that you were ignorant of this circumstance: I well know that you have already been informed of it."

"I will not deny it lady Theodora:" cried Adolphus. "But come, though you have not invited me to Heath Cottage, yet I will avail myself of this opportunity in witnessing the charms of your little protégée. She is, I am told, uncommonly beautiful."

"And of whom did you receive this intelligence?" demanded lady Theodora with a blush instantly overspreading her features, "Not from your uncle Sir Mildred Austincourt: he would be the last to dwell on the perfections of poor little Frances; for he does not like the child. From whom then did you receive your information Mr. Walsingham?"

Adolphus looked really embarrassed; and lady Theodora enjoyed his confusion. At length he answered,—

"Your inquiry is somewhat abrupt lady Theodora."

To which she instantly retorted with an assumed air of gayety,—

"Nay don't fatigue your memory; if you cannot recollect, it is quite immaterial to me who has spoken to you of little Frances, provided that they have only spoken the truth."

The earnest and impressive look which Theodora now turned upon Adolphus did but increase the former marks of embarrassment that he had betrayed; and he felt the most intolerable repugnance to renew a subject, which, not only created in his breast the insupportable pangs of heart-wounding jealousy, but he also felt the utter impossibility of revealing the confidence which had been reposed in him by Edmund. He could not do this consistently with honor and

integrity ; and he therefore determined that such communication should be buried in the secret recesses of his heart ; and not knowing how to repair the mischief he had made by having excited the curiosity of lady Theodora, he suddenly attracted her attention to the weather, which presaged a coming storm, and intreated her permission to conduct her in safety to her own habitation ; to which she replied,—

“Certainly if you feel so disposed Mr. Walsingham, and are not afraid of hazarding the displeasure of Sir Mildred, why, I cannot possibly have any objection. So if you please, I will put myself under your protection till I at least arrive at Heath Cottage, where I shall be happy of your company to breakfast, which has been waiting for me these several hours.”

And lady Theodora without any hesitation passed her arm through that of Adolphus ; who, at this moment, would have considered himself the happiest of all created beings, had not one reflection, one soul-harrowing reflection, that there was yet another arm besides his own on which Theodora had rested for support, floated across his imagination and embittered the sweets which he might otherwise have enjoyed in her fascinating society. This thought however not being communicated to lady Theodora, she unconsciously shone in all her charms of the most lively and animated conversation. In every action there was grace ; in every look harmony ; and in every word expression. And as Adolphus passionately gazed on her fair and faultless face, he could not help feeling the full force of his uncle’s observation, that lady Theodora possessed the power of enchanting the senses in a very superior degree ; and that she indeed was a bewitching Circe.

Adolphus having partaken of a very elegant repast now apologized to lady Theodora that he could not prolong his stay at Heath Cottage ; and at the same time informed her what personages were now Sir Mildred's guests and on a visit at the Priory. Whether this communication was pleasing to lady Theodora, was not to be determined from her manner and tone of voice, for she exclaimed with increased vivacity—

“ Oh ! I have seen and I know them all except lord Villeroy. Him I have not seen, but I have a great respect for his amiable and lovely sister, whom I have visited at Avondale very lately ; and there I first beheld lady Mountsorrel, after which Mr. Walsingham, I never repeated my visit. I have an aversion to that woman not merely grounded on prejudice. I have some ostensible reasons which I shall not at present disclose to any one for disliking her. Poor Rebecca Mantle, I pity her. Ah ! Mr. Walsingham, I could tell you such a story about Miss Mantle ! Lady Theodora paused, sighed heavily, and exhibited a countenance which reflected in purity that of a pitying angel.

Adolphus at that moment felt a doubt of the injurious suspicions which Edmund had inspired him with against this lovely and bewitching creature. He arose to depart, and taking the hand of Theodora, was about to press it to his lips, when the thought of the young Antonia again tortured him almost to phrenzy. The beautiful hand remained in the same position in which he had taken it, and in a voice scarcely audible, he pronounced—

“ Theodora ! dear lady Theodora ! heaven forbid that I should persuade you to drive from your heart any impressions which may induce you to think

favourably towards the silent and almost dumb companion of lady Mountsorrel ; but for heaven's sake do not encourage mystery and concealment, in which purity so frequently wears the semblance of guilt—and all is wrapt in fearful doubt and suspicion."

The agitation of Adolphus was predominant almost in every feature. His complexion had changed to an ashy paleness, and in tremulous accents he bade lady Theodora farewell, with a promise that he would take an early opportunity of visiting her again.

" Oh ! whenever you think proper, Mr. Walsingham," answered lady Theodora, with assumed indifference ; for that her manners were now only assumed was pretty evident from the changes of her expressive countenance.

" You may come and go just as you please without any interruption, for I shall never give you a formal invitation. Heath Cottage is always open for the reception of my friends, and I am always happy to see them there."

Adolphus bowed and now respectfully retired, in a state of mind by no means enviable, for he doubted, while he felt but too conscious that he unutterably loved ! and though jealousy, " the green eyed monster," haunted him in every shape, he could not thoroughly persuade himself that the lovely creature with whom he had just separated, on whose countenance there did not appear the slightest vestige of art or dissimulation, could be the imposing object that Edmund had described ; and he doubted not but time would elucidate those mysteries in which Theodora was so unfortunately connected ; or that she herself would one day or other reveal them to his knowledge,



should an entire and implicit confidence be established between them, which must ultimately be the case before he could declare the deep interest he had taken in her concerns, or the influence she held in his heart. Cautiously therefore did he determine to unveil the secrets of that heart to the observation of his fair enslaver, and faithfully to watch over her actions with, if possible, the circumspection of an impartial eye. He had indeed this morning followed her unconsciously to one of her private haunts in the neighbourhood of Heathwood, and in what character did she then appear?—in that of an angel of compassion, administering to the wants and infirmities of her fellow-creatures, and to whose assistance she had cheerfully flown in the hour of calamity, regardless of her own personal convenience or the danger which surrounded her. This was the first action he had traced in the conduct of lady Theodora Percy, since he had taken upon himself to become the secret guardian of all her designs, and with this “malice itself could not find a fault.”

With his mind occupied by these reflections, Adolphus returned to the Priory, where his absence had scarcely been remarked, owing to the lateness of the hour at which the guests of Sir Mildred had assembled in the breakfast parlour, the honours of which were kindly undertaken by Miss Mantle; neither lady Villeroy nor lady Mountsorrel being ever visible till the approach of noon, for both these ladies closely copied each other's peculiarities and most favourite propensities on every occasion, and consequently they both preferred taking breakfast in their own apartments.

When Adolphus made his entrance, therefore, he only found his uncle, to whom he instantly related his adventure with lady Theodora Percy, of his encountering her ladyship at the door of the old woman's hut, and of the relief which even at so unusually an early hour she had been administering to the wants of the poor sufferers. At which Sir Mildred expressed his warm approbation, while he added with a smile—

“And so Dolphy you could not rest till you had apprised lady Theodora of her danger?”

“It was my duty, Sir. I should have done that if I had not regarded lady Theodora any more than an entire stranger,” replied Adolphus, with no small symptoms of embarrassment resting in brilliant glows on his complexion.

“Why certainly,” cried Sir Mildred, not appearing to notice his confusion, “a young and beautiful female like Theodora, it must be admitted merited this mark of attention, and I repeat that it was certainly very kind of you to rise at break of day at this unpleasant season of the year, and journey full five miles over an uncomfortable wild heath, for the strict performance of your duty. Well, I hope Theodora treated you kindly after all the trouble you had taken on her account.”

To which Adolphus replied—

“I am perfectly satisfied, Sir, with my reception at Heath Cottage, and shall certainly repeat my visit there at some future opportunity.”

“I don't in the least doubt it, nor can you suppose, my dear boy, that I have the slightest objection,” answered Sir Mildred, “only have a care of Markey,

he is a great admirer of Theodora, and very intimate with her."

"Very intimate with Theodora, my dear uncle," cried Adolphus in agitation.

And Sir Mildred, laughing most heartily, exclaimed—

"Why zounds, Dolphy, what is the matter with you? You are desperately in love indeed, if you are jealous of poor Markey."

To which Adolphus, ashamed of the sensation he had exhibited, coldly replied—

"I am not aware, Sir, of being in love at all."

"No—truly it is an enemy that seldom openly advances," retorted Sir Mildred, "for it comes upon us by stealth, and when we are least aware of its approaches or least able to resist its insidious attacks."

They were now joined by lord Villeroy, Miss Mantle, Miss Villeroy, and Mr. Markland, the last of whom entered the room exclaiming to his lordship, with whom he had been conversing on the present calamities at Heathwood—

"But I tell you again, my lord, that you are wrong, decidedly wrong, by the example of your ill seasoned clemency to such a fellow; and zounds, now I come to think seriously of the business, you have shewn no clemency at all; the term is improper: you have only given that unprincipled and unfeeling monster, a more reasonable pretext for disobeying your commands. I tell you what, my lord Villeroy, had he been a steward of mine, he should not have continued on my estate another day. I would instantly have discharged him."

To which lord Villeroy replied—

"How could I act otherwise, Markland, when lady

Mountsorrel condescended to plead in his behalf? To such a pleader what could I advance?"

To which Markland stationing himself in his old favorite elbow chair very quaintly replied,—

"To such a fiddle-stick's end. I should have acted with justice, if all the titled ladies in this kingdom or any other had pleaded for such a good for nothing scoundrel. And between you and I and the post my lord, if the fellow had been meritorious instead of notorious, it is not clear to me whether her ladyship would have been his advocate at all. Some men advance to high posts and distinguished honors in these days of refinement and taste by only having their follies and vices to recommend them; and this is the case, as I should suspect, with your lordship's honorable steward Mr. Varney."

Lord Villeroy was silent and felt abashed.

"Methinks you are unnecessarily severe Markland," at length cried Sir Mildred. "May I be permitted to inquire what Varney has done to displease you?"

"Ask his lordship," replied Markland gruffly, "he is acquainted with all the merits of the case and will inform you rightly."

Lord Villeroy, now called upon so pointedly, felt himself piqued and embarrassed, and after some hesitation, threw a disdainful, or rather a reproachful, glance towards Mr. Markland, and addressed Sir Mildred as follows:

"Respecting the merits of the case, we will if you please, leave merit wholly out of the question, since I believe there is but little attached to it. You must know my good Sir Mildred, that I deputed Varney some time ago to call on some of my tenants at Heath-

wood and investigate the true nature of their distresses, which they had urged as excuses for the non-payment of their rents, and if he found them really in want of the common necessities of life, as had been represented, to supply them with some small sums of money to relieve their immediate necessities, and that I should not require a return of the same, till, by a renewal of their strength and industry, they were enabled to give me some testimony of gratitude, by working in my plantations."

To which Sir Mildred replied,—

"And let me tell you, that this was a very fair and honorable plan of your lordship's. You could not have done better if you had been sitting in the court of equity to render the decrees of justice. But pray proceed; I am all attention."

And lord Villeroy continued.

"Well Sir Mildred, I regret to say, that Varney, so far from having executed the commission with which he was charged, extorted the money due for the rents from many of these poor unfortunates; by which merciless cruelty, they have been driven from the shelter of their habitations; while others lay ill of the fever which now rages in the village, or perished through the pressure of immediate want. By mere accident I have discovered the oppressive tyranny and villainous conduct of the unfeeling Varney; and though I have certainly not discharged him from my service, yet, I shall never be persuaded to receive him with confidence again."

"And this is the only part of the business in which your lordship does not appear to act consistently:" retorted Sir Mildred. "Varney is a base wretch;

and he who would not shew mercy to others, has no right to expect that it will be tendered to him. Besides, there is danger in retaining such a man in your service; it is more than probable that he may deceive you again. There is nothing to plead in his behalf; and were I your lordship, I should instantly discharge him."

"Your arguments are just Sir Mildred," cried lord Villeroy, "Varney shall quit Avondale this evening; even though Elinor herself were to contradict my authority."

"That her ladyship should reasonably object to such an exceeding proper arrangement excites my astonishment," uttered Sir Mildred, "however my lord, if you are not utterly blind to your own interest, you will not be persuaded to act contrary to your inclination"——

"Which now prompts me to follow your advice," said lord Villeroy. "Mr. Markland, will you do me the favor of being my deputy on this occasion. Have the goodness to write to Avondale and inform Varney that I no longer require his services; and desire that he will quit my house on the notice here given; and that he will surrender up all his accounts and other papers that he may have in his possession. I will for once be arbitrary. Elinor's foolish and absurd propensities cannot always be complied with. Yes, yes, I will once be master of my own authority."

And lord Villeroy paced the room in a little agitation, and fearfully starting at the sound of every foot-step, apprehensive that it might be lady Mountsorrel, to the no small amusement of all the present company but Rebecca Mantle; on whose mild countenance

there was a reflection of some of the unpleasing sensations, which, at that moment, occupied no small share in the breast of lord Villeroy. Rebecca Mantle looked pained; but as she uttered not a word, nobody could find out what was the cause of her present inquietude. And lord Villeroy, he did not look pleased, in the fear that somebody else would not be so. Meanwhile Mr. Markland enjoyed with a satisfaction he could ill conceal, the success of his timely interference. For had lady Mountsorrel been present, he would have despaired of obtaining a victory. And in answer to the foregoing speech uttered by lord Villeroy, he exclaimed,—

“Bravo! bravo my lord! never let this spirit down; you cannot imagine how admirably it becomes you. Does it not Sir Mildred? I tell you what my lord, were I to marry the lady Mountsorrel, which heaven forbid, being your lordship’s destined bride, but were I to marry lady Mountsorrel, I would make her respect my authority, or she should have none of her own I promise you. Wives were made to obey their lords and masters, and”——

“Cease your funning, force, and cunning”

was now distinctly warbled forth by one of the most enchanting female voices in the whole world.

And lord Villeroy rapturously exclaimed—

“It is my Elinor! not a word more I beseech you Markland about Varney. It would be barbarous to change those soft melodious notes into discord and strains of anger. I could not bear to put her in an ill humour now.”

Sir Mildred looked reproachfully at lord Villeroy but was silent ; while Mr. Markland advanced towards the middle of the room on his way to the door to which he was hastily retreating and vociferating as loud as he could bawl—

“ If to her share some female errors fall,

“ Look in her face, and you’ll forget them all.”

My lord Villeroy, I bid you farewell. In two hours hence I shall be on my journey to Avondale punctually and conscientiously to perform your lordship’s commands.”

Mr. Markland had now reached the door, and lord Villeroy intreated him to return; to which he answered,—

“ No my lord, I will give place to a brighter luminary. Meanwhile, I will make all possible despatch to lighten your darkness on the road to Avondale.”

And instantly closing the door after him, prevented the possibility of any further countermand being made to his intended expedition.



## CHAPTER LIII.

The situation of the parties on the immediate appearance of lady Mountsorrel was novel in the extreme, if not ludicrous. Lord Villeroy had not yet recovered from his profound astonishment at the sudden and determined manner in which Markland had made his exit; and neither Sir Mildred nor Adolphus could prevent the effects of risibility being visible on their countenances. Angelina and Miss Mantle however still preserved a look of gravity on the approach of her ladyship: the former, not daring to indulge her propensity to laughter; and the latter, from some unknown cause or other, did not appear in her usual spirits. The look of serenity, which always gleamed in mild glances from the dove-like eyes of Rebecca Mantle, on this morning, was flown; and though she retained her accustomed good humour, yet her eyes were frequently moistened with tears; which were by no means unobserved by Adolphus; and the words of lady Theodora now very forcibly recurred to his recollection—"I could tell you such a story about Miss Mantle"—but what that story was remained an impenetrable mystery. Nor was Adolphus extremely solicitous about the companion of such a woman as lady Mountsorrel; towards whom he did not feel the highest respect, or entertain the most favorable impressions.

As the guest of his uncle however, and a lady of exalted rank, he was by no means deficient in paying her those attentions to which she was entitled; but he

felt a repugnance to offer her more. Nor were her charms such as to excite in him any extraordinary admiration; although so warmly extolled by others. It was bold and masculine beauty; to which he always professed an unconquerable dislike. Unfortunately however for our Orphan Boy, he had excited very different sensations in the bosom of lady Mountsorrel; and she continued her unceasing assiduities, notwithstanding the repellant coldness with which he treated her, to his great annoyance, and frequently, his extreme embarrassment and perplexity. When in the presence even of lord Villeroy she was not withheld from her troublesome, and what Adolphus now considered, indelicate advances towards him.

One morning when walking with lord Villeroy, who appeared unusually thoughtful, his lordship suddenly asked him, if he did not think lady Mountsorrel a most beautiful woman, likely to captivate the heart of any man who was not insensate to the charms of the whole sex. To which Adolphus without the smallest hesitation, and rejoiced that he should now have an opportunity of confessing his real sentiments of lady Mountsorrel, replied,—

“Pardon me my lord, but you have taken an amazing latitude in your supposition.”

“How pray?” cried his lordship, regarding Adolphus with a look of the utmost astonishment.

“By taxing every heart with insensibility that does not regard the charms of lady Mountsorrel with passionate admiration,” cried Adolphus. “I, for my part, must candidly confess, that though I think her ladyship a fine woman, I do not consider her a beautiful one.”

To which his lordship warmly exclaimed,—

“ This is merely evasion Walsingham. All who have seen Elinor have acknowledged the superiority of her charms; nor will I credit your assertion, till you positively swear that your heart is captivated by another. Were that not the case, it is impossible for you or any other man to behold the beauty of lady Mountsorrel with indifference.”

To which Adolphus indignantly replied,—

“ My lord, I am not used to be evasive when I am strictly asked for the truth; and though I certainly shall not comply with your lordship’s request of making an avowal of the state of the affections of my heart, yet I must once more positively repeat to your lordship, that heart could never wear the chains of lady Mountsorrel, even were your lordship’s prior claim on that lady’s affections entirely out of the question. My lord, on the honor of a man, I am now speaking the truth.”

There was a look of sincerity, as well as a dignity in the manner of Adolphus, which carried conviction along with it; and which, not being altogether free from a certain mixture of conscious superiority over the weak and subdued mind of lord Villeroy, occasioned a sort of pained and mortified feeling in his mind, as well as the apprehension of having offended a young man of such superior mental endowments; and extending his hand towards Adolphus he exclaimed,—

“ Forgive me Walsingham if I have uttered any thing in folly to offend you. Believe me that I neither doubt your just pretensions as a man of honor, or a man of feeling; yet, I am unfortunately a slave to that passion I would condemn in others; I love lady Mountsorrel to adoration: she has long held her reign over

my heart; and her power now is absolute. Pardon me then if in every new face I dread a rival. And why do I dread it? Because I am doubtful of her affections. Elinor is as capricious and changeable as the waving wind; and I fear to lose her in every breath of the fanning zephyr. Yet, ah Walsingham! I am still compelled to love my beautiful tyrant, and unceasingly to adore the bright star of my future destiny."

Scarce had these words been uttered from the lips of lord Villeroy when the piercing shriek of a female alarmed and rivetted their attention, and they immediately hastened to the spot from whence they imagined it to have proceeded; which was the bank of the river, that flowed, at this season of the year, with the most tempestuous violence. They listened with the most profound attention; but there was not a vestige of a human being near the spot. And lord Villeroy exclaimed, not without some symptoms of alarm depicted in his countenance,—

"It is singularly strange that we do not see any person."

"Perhaps it was only the spirit of the water shrieked," cried Adolphus smiling.

"Ah! would that we could give credit to the illusion my dear fellow," rejoined Villeroy, "but I am more seriously alarmed than you can imagine. It was certainly the cry of a female which seemed to issue from these banks; to which the river is so near, that the possibility of some person having met with an accident alarms me dreadfully. For heaven's sake let us instantly return and make the most expeditious inquiries."

This was accordingly done, and lord Villeroy and Adolphus arrived at the priory in breathless haste;

where they instantly repeated the circumstance, with the cause of their apprehensions to Sir Mildred, and means were resorted to immediately. But all inquiries proved ineffectual; neither had any inhabitant been absent, or was found missing in the hamlet, or neighbouring villages.

"O doubtless it is some fair witch of the lake," exclaimed lady Mountsorrel, "have a care Mr. Walsingham, there is danger in a witch's smile."

There was a peculiar expression in the countenance of lady Mountsorrel of so mysterious a nature, that when she fixed her dark and uncommonly brilliant and piercing eyes full on the countenance of Adolphus, it made him, he knew not why, instinctively shrink from their bright beams. But the nature of their expression did not remain the same a moment when Sir Mildred exclaimed in the most serious and alarmed accents, glancing a displeased look at her ladyship,—

"Why really my lord, I am not inclined to treat with levity a subject that is at all connected with the safety of a human being. Some serious calamity may have happened for aught that we can tell; and some wretched female expired in these waters before any assistance could be obtained. It is a most extraordinary and singular occurrence; therefore nephew, let us not treat it lightly. I beg you will immediately ride over to Heath Cottage, and see that all is safe with lady Theodora Percy."

At this magical name the cheeks of Adolphus assumed their usual brilliant colouring; his eyes sparkled; and he looked delighted beyond the power of concealment, at being chosen ambassador on such an occasion; while an expression of the most malignant fury sat on

the mortified, disappointed, and to all intents and purposes, the envious brows of lady Mountsorrel ; and

“ Please to ruin others’ wooing,

“ Never happy in her own,”

might very justly be ascribed to those sentiments, which were now rapidly advancing to take possession of her ladyship’s bosom ; as she turned towards Adolphus with an air of the most bitter irony, while she disdainfully uttered,—

“ And pray give my compliments to lady Theodora Percy, Mr. Walsingham : she is a prodigious favorite of mine ; only a little too fond of indulging in propensities, which, however pleasant to her own feelings, are excessively annoying to those of other people! Heaven’s! I shall never forget when she first came over to Avondale with that Italian brat which she is so passionately fond of: how it screamed and roared to come from the arms of the nurse on purpose that she might devour it with kisses. Then to permit it to tear all the ornaments from her watch without being angry; to put it to bed with her own hands; to pray over it half an hour when it is asleep; to cry ready to break her heart when any indisposition happens suddenly to seize it: I say these are all very curious propensities, and uncommon ideas, with a young woman who is not married; and I must say, highly ridiculous and indecorous in such a personage as lady Theodora Percy.”

“ And very suspicious too let me tell you!” cried lady Villeroy, “ as well as imprudent, to bestow such extraordinary marks of attention and care upon an

infant that nobody knows who the father or mother belongs to. I assure you that, when lady Theodora used to ramble about the woods with that mysterious young foreigner whom they called Mr. Antonia—when I have actually beheld her ladyship leaning on his arm with all the familiar confidence of the most endearing friendship—yes, I assure you, that I myself have listened to observations made on lady Theodora Percy by no means delicate or proper. Not that I think there is any criminality in her. Heaven forbid! for I am sure she looks the semblance of purity; and I should never have permitted Angelina, my daughter, to have renewed any connexion with her, if I had thought lady Theodora really imprudent.”

The feelings of Adolphus, which had, during the foregoing conversation between the two ladies, been of the most painful and agonizing nature, were, at the conclusion of lady Villeroy's speech become insupportable; and he felt the necessity of making an immediate retreat, not only to conceal the anguish of his heart, but to prevent an exposure of the warmth of his temper by retorting on the vindictive and malicious insinuations thrown on the conduct of lady Theodora; in which, to his utter surprise, grief, and astonishment, his uncle seemed tacitly to bear a part, for he did not attempt to contradict her accusers, or in any shape to vindicate her innocence. What then, was he to conclude that Theodora was guilty; that the suspicions of Edmund were justified; and that he himself was deceived by her imposing artlessness of character? Ramble in the woods with Antonia—lean on the arm of Antonia—become the theme of public conversation; nay, perhaps the theme of scandal; and all for the sake

of this mysterious, this accursed Italian! The idea was insupportably painful! it was distracting! and snatching up his hat, Adolphus rushed out of the house, determined that very night to seek an explanation with lady Theodora; to inform her of the suspicions which were excited by her mysterious conduct towards the infant she protected, and to know at once whether she merited his affections, or was, on the contrary, unworthy of the attachment of a man of honor. With these reflections he had rushed from the presence of the scandalous party; and had proceeded almost as far as the inclosure of the park, when stopping to take breath beneath the foliage of some beautiful trees, that shaded a hermitage at the extremity of the park, he perceived a figure advancing to him: — it was Rebecca Mantle, who, in tremulous accents, pronounced,

“Be not offended, I implore you, Mr. Walsingham, at the sight of an impertinent instructor, whose heart, lacerated as it is, has yet a spark of generous sympathy left for the feelings of others. The moments are precious, and must not be spent in idle words. Take then the assurance of Rebecca Mantle, that all you have just heard against lady Theodora Percy is false! Angels are not purer than are the thoughts, the actions, and the character of that lovely innocent creature!”

“Prove your assertions, madam, to be true, and I will fall down and worship you!” exclaimed Adolphus, not only surprised by the appearance of Miss Mantle, but greatly softened and penetrated by her tone and manner of addressing him.

“Mr. Walsingham,” cried she, “it is not per-



mitted me to be more explicit. Would to heaven that I now had full liberty to disclose the mystery which at present involves that incomparable matchless creature; but the proofs you require are in the ordination of Providence, by whose unerring wisdom they can alone be revealed. Patiently endure the issue of that, and you will see the tried and unexampled virtue of Theodora Percy descending from the skies the brightest pattern of female excellence, and the fairest ornament of woman kind!"

With these words Miss Mantle instantly departed, leaving Adolphus transfixed with wonder and amazement, and under the consoling reflection, that he had not yet seen Theodora in the first heat of those sensations which had so powerfully impressed him with a thought of her unworthiness.

The speed with which Miss Mantle had walked, as she quitted the side of Adolphus, had made her unconscious of having dropped her handkerchief, and she had gone too far for Adolphus to apprise her of it: he contented himself, therefore, with carefully depositing it in his pocket, intending to restore it to her at a convenient opportunity; and he now pursued his walk, with a rapid pace, toward the habitation of lady Theodora Percy in a much more tranquil state of mind than when he set out; and though he was well aware that there was a great degree of mystery attached to the character of Rebecca, yet it was impossible to think unfavorable of her in the present instance, as her friendship for lady Theodora appeared to be of sterling value, for it was without interest; and when she heard her reviled, and the pain it had inflicted, she had flown to vindicate the character of her friend, and

to give him the most consoling assurances of her innocence.

This was an act of humanity and justice as well as friendship ; and Adolphus, from the present relieved state of his before tortured reflections, felt that he was much indebted to the kind interference of Rebecca Mantle.

He had now arrived within sight of the dwelling of lady Theodora : his heart palpitated, and his hand trembled, as he touched the knocker which was to give him entrance there. He had no time for further reflection however, for his name was no sooner announced than he was immediately admitted to the apartment of lady Theodora, by the attendant Brunette, who, respectfully dropping a courtesy, with " My lady will attend you presently, sir," quitted the room.

Adolphus perceived that Theodora still retained her predilection for flowers ; for several rich vases were filled with a collection of the most choice, delicate, and beautiful exotics, which emitted their charming and delightful fragrance throughout the apartment ; every part of which exhibited the tasteful elegance of its lovely and accomplished mistress. A harp of the most exquisite workmanship was placed near the fire-screen ; and the popular ballad of " Rest, thee babe, rest thee," stood open on the music-stand. A volume of Shakspeare's plays and a small work-basket, were on the table ; with the former of which it appeared that Theodora had been engaged, for the book was not shut, a leaf was turned down, and a particular passage marked with a pencil. The play was Othello ; and in a trembling agitated voice, with sensations

which may better be imagined than described, Adolphus read the following lines :—

- “ Good name, in man, and woman, dear my lord,
- “ Is the immediate jewel of their souls :
- “ Who steals my purse, steals trash ; 'tis something, nothing ;
- “ 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands ;
- “ But he that filches from me my good name,
- “ Robs me of that, which not enriches him,
- “ And makes me poor indeed !”

A sensation, almost approaching to shame, had overshadowed the fine expressive features of Adolphus, when the soft step of Theodora arrested his attention, and informed him she was near ; and as he listened to the sound of her melodious voice, giving some orders to her attendants. Adolphus endeavoured to divest himself of all unpleasing sensations, and to welcome the approach of lady Theodora with the cordial smile of confidence and friendship.

At length the door unclosed, and she appeared, leading in her hand a beautiful little girl, whose age did not appear to exceed two years, if so much ; and her ladyship presenting it to Adolphus, pronounced in the most enchanting accents, though with an air of her usual gaiety, “ Walsingham, behold my little foundling !”

The lovely innocent instantly stretched out its little arms towards Adolphus, and lisping out, in its scarce distinguishable accents, “ Love Fanny,” was immediately placed on his knee, receiving innumerable marks of his attention and honoured with many caresses, which indeed it was impossible to deny to the

little foundling, for never had he seen a child of such exquisite beauty—her complexion being of the most transcendant fairness and delicacy, with large dark blue eyes, and a profusion of light auburn hair, which parted in natural and glossy ringlets on her snowy, fair, and open brows. Her nose was nearly approaching to what might be termed aquiline ; and her mouth dimpled at each corner, and just disclosing the little ivory teeth, was uncommonly beautiful when she smiled, giving to the appearance of this little cherubed-faced creature the look of an angelic, instead of a terrestrial, being.

It was some time before Adolphus could remove his eyes from examining every lineament in the face of the lovely little foundling, which he did in so close, earnest, and particular a manner as to excite the astonishment of lady Theodora, who, however, preserved the most profound silence, when Adolphus, resigning the little charge to the arms of her protectress, with a sort of struggled and suppressed sigh, exclaimed, “ Could the father, could the mother of this infant, be human, lady Theodora ? Had they hearts, had they feelings, when they deserted this child ? No, they were monsters ! Unnatural remorseless monsters ! for whom (whatever be their sufferings) it would be impiety to drop a tear ; for whom it be sacrilege to —— ”

Adolphus paused, for the countenance of lady Theodora had suddenly become agitated : the bright hues, before so fresh and blooming in her complexion, changed to a sickly paleness, and straining little Frances to her bosom, with an emotion of tenderness which, at that moment, seemed to be involuntary, she exclaimed, —

“ Spare, oh ! spare, these invectives ! They pain me, Walsingham, they agitate, they affect me ! ”

To which Adolphus immediately answered (all his assumed tranquillity of manner being suddenly vanished)

“ And why should my invectives either pain or afflict you, any more than they do me, lady Theodora ? ”

“ Because, as you do not know either the father or the mother of this child, why should you unnecessarily indulge in these invectives against them ? ” uttered she. “ How do you know that they merit all your reproaches ? ”

Adolphus now regarded Theodora with a less softened aspect, and fixing on her a stern and enquiring look, replied,—

“ If I do not know them, it is very plain to be perceived that your ladyship does : and however you may think it necessary to gloss over the failings, nay, perhaps, the vices, of some individuals, the world, lady Theodora, may not be inclined to be quite so lenient and kindly indulgent. The history of your little foundling is already doubted ; and imprudently and (I do not say) not maliciously talked of ; and even in the neighbourhood of Austincourt Priory, they have presumed to mention the name of Theodora Percy with the most unbecoming levity. ”

“ What ! because I am the protectress of this infant,” demanded lady Theodora, in a manner so perfectly cool and collected, that Adolphus imagining it to be a stronger proof of her indiscretion, and of her indifference towards him, warmly repeated,—

“ Pardon me, lady Theodora,—your being the protectress of that infant, provided there was no mystery

attached to it, could not be alleged as either a fault or a mark of indiscretion ; but there are other mysteries and other suppositions from which you are not spared ; and it is with pain, it is with inexpressible grief, I add, that it will be a difficult matter to exonerate your ladyship from those suspicions, which appearances have so strongly given birth to, and by that means, warranted."

The complexion of lady Theodora, from the palest lily, now arose suddenly to a colour brighter and more beautiful than the tints of morn, when it first breaks forth from the soft celestial sky ; and she even smiled as she witnessed the contending tide of tumultuous passion, which was now so predominant in the countenance of Adolphus ; and ringing the bell, with a composed air, for an attendant, she imprinted an ardent kiss on the roseate lips of the unconscious little foundling, and instantly dismissed her ; then turning towards Adolphus, she addressed him, assuming as much as possible an air of gaiety which perhaps might be foreign to her heart.

" And so, Walsingham, you have really heard something derogatory to my character in the neighbourhood of Austincourt Priory ? To which I shall only say, That I do not in the least wonder at it."

" Not wonder at it, Theodora !" exclaimed Adolphus.

" No !" cried lady Theodora, with a voice now firm and indignant : I do not wonder at any credibility which tales of infamous aspersion may receive when Sir Mildred Austincourt himself listens patiently to their hearing, and such guests are constantly invited by him beneath the roof of Austincourt Priory

I am no stranger from whose lips you received these friendly hints, Mr. Walsingham ; to which your uncle kindly adds his sanction and support. And have you heard no reports out of Austincourt Priory of the same nature ? Did you not hear at Pennington too of the indiscretion of Theodora Percy ?

Adolphus was silent and transfixed as a statue : he was penetrated to the soul by the manner of Theodora, and ashamed of the warmth of temper he had betrayed ; yet jealousy, that demon of all repose, had not yet withdrawn his terrific shadow from his heated and perturbed imagination : not sullenly therefore, but silently, he waited the issue of Theodora's discourse ; and never had she appeared so interestingly lovely, or so animated ; and while he rivetted his eyes on her lovely figure, which was robed in a superb and elegant white muslin dress, she again addressed him in the following manner : —

“ I do not know what Edmund has told you Mr. Walsingham ; nor what Sir Mildred has alleged against me ; nor what the scandalous party may have been pleased to report of me ; for I have been very careless and indifferent about myself : I never once thought of myself when others have been implicated in danger, or when the tale of misfortune has reached my ear, I never waited for cold inquiries, or frigid ceremony ; but granted them the immediate assistance they required : by which I have been frequently made the dupe of my incautious haste. I did not know however, that destiny marked me out for something more severe ; and that while I was lamenting your fate, my own would too shortly resemble it.”

“ How dearest Theodora ? ” inquired Adolphus,

wholly thrown off his guard; and seizing the hand of Theodora with the most passionate fervor, he intreated her instantly to explain herself more explicitly; and Theodora instantly replied:—

“ You Walsingham fled from Austincourt Priory because you were bound by a sacred oath never to reveal the secret you were entrusted with, and that lost you the affections of Sir Mildred and involved you in mystery; and this oath was extorted from you by Frederic Austincourt: through the treachery of his mother you became his victim and her own. But this was not sufficient. After your departure there was another victim wanting to complete the final triumph of lady Austincourt: Walsingham, that victim was Theodora Percy!”

“ Heavenly powers!” exclaimed Adolphus, lost in wonder and amazement. And lady Theodora now greatly agitated, continued.

“ You had no sooner quitted Austincourt Priory, than I was assailed with the detestable addresses of your cousin Frederic, to whom I ever had the most unconquerable aversion, and I peremptorily refused him. Still I was unceasingly persecuted and incessantly pursued, either by the bold and disagreeable advances of Frederic, or the more frightful and continued reproaches of his indignant mother: I applied to Sir Mildred, then my guardian, to be relieved from the importunities of his son; but his influence was unavailing. I flew for consolation to Edmund; and to do him justice, I always found in him a sincere friend, till a coincidence of circumstances Mr. Walsingham (here lady Theodora blushed deeply, and Adolphus was again on the rack) with which this story is con-



nected occasioned us to quarrel incessantly ; after which, Edmund married Julia Montgomery and went to reside at Pennington, being made rector of that place. Previous to this I lost my dear lamented friend Camilla Grandison. I again became the object of the most cruel persecution with the unfeeling lady Austincourt ; who one morning entered my dressing-room in an agitation most truly deplorable : she was pale, breathless, and almost frantic. I implored her to tell me the cause of her distress, when she exclaimed,—

“ ‘ Cruel girl ! it is you who are the cause of this emotion ; it is you who have destroyed me.’ ”

“ ‘ Me lady Austincourt !’ ” uttered I in the utmost terror and surprise ; “ (for I must tell you Walsingham, that lady Austincourt always had the power of inspiring me with fear, though she failed to excite my regard) what have I now done to displease your ladyship ?’ ”

“ To which she replied in the most passionate agony of a flood of tears,—

“ ‘ You have done more thou cruel and remorseless girl—you have broken my heart by refusing to marry Frederic ; and there is now only one way of repairing the misfortune you have created, and of restoring us both to happiness again.’ ”

“ I burst into tears : I felt myself wholly in the power of lady Austincourt. I thought of my absent father ; and of poor Camilla Grandison, whose remains were now mouldering in the cold earth : on her bosom I could no more repose my sorrows : to her sympathizing ear no more repose my griefs : Miss Grandison was gone for ever !—and I sobbed convulsively. At

that moment lady Austincourt took advantage of my subdued feelings, and throwing her arms round me, besought me to save her and Frederic from utter ruin and despair. 'Tell me how,' cried I, 'relieve me from the solicitations of Frederic—promise that I shall never again be importuned to marry him, and whatever else you may require I will cheerfully perform.' Ah, Walsingham, my destiny was fixed! had you seen the countenance of lady Austincourt at that moment you could never have forgotten it: her eyes sparkled with triumph; and the success of the victory she had already obtained over my feelings, and in rapturous accents she exclaimed,—

"Now you are my own sweet Theodora again; and are you ready to comply with my wishes, my sweet love, be they ever so extraordinary? Will you swear, Theodora, to perform what I shall require of you?"

Without a moment's hesitation I pronounced Yes.

Lady Austincourt immediately took me by the hand, and opening the door of her own private dressing-room, introduced me to the presence of two persons: the one was Frederic Austincourt; the other, Walsingham, I dare not repeat the name of. I am forbid, by the most sacred oath, never to repeat her name, for it was a female that my eyes encountered. I will only sum up the evidence of my persecution, which was precisely this,—Lady Austincourt inhumanly exacted the promise I had given her, by then extorting from my lips the oath she bound me in, never to revoke; the nature of which I cannot at present unfold, nor even to you discover; for I have sent it up to Heaven and it is there registered. In the expiring moments of lady Austincourt, she did not absolve me from it.

I was again compelled to repeat it; and I believe in the presence of Edmund, I again promised his dying mother a strict and solemn performance of my oath, of which he remained in ignorance, having heard only part of the words which she addressed to me on that occasion.

“Walsingham, at this period I departed for the shores of Italy, under the protection of the Count De Valmont (now Count Molini, in consequence of his accession to some family estates, he is now obliged to assume the title); and with him I repaired to the chateau of my father, whose blessing I had scarcely received before he expired in the arms of Count Molini. Shall I tell you that here I was not permitted to be at rest; and lady Austincourt, though dead, the nature of her oath still pursued me. I was obliged to conform to all that it imposed; and I came over to England once more, with all the inconveniencies that were attached to it. The Count and Countess Molini were the companions of my voyage; and——and——”

Theodora faltered, hesitated, blushed; and Adolphus, though he could have worshipped the angelic creature before him, yet at this part of the narration felt all his old sensations rapidly advancing, and he exclaimed, looking full in the face of the blushing Theodora, —

“And Signior Antonia—was he not the companion of your voyage also lady Theodora? or have you quite forgotten the young mysterious foreigner?”

To which lady Theodora replied, “No, indeed, I have but too much reason to remember him; but why that question, Walsingham? All that I have been able to reveal to you, openly and candidly I have

done; but further I am not permitted, nor must you require it. I am involved in mystery and concealment; but my oath to lady Austincourt is the cause of it."

"But one more question, Theodora," impatiently demanded Adolphus.

"And what is that?" cried her ladyship, somewhat alarmed at his impetuosity. "So, Antonia, involved in mystery and concealment too?"

"Walsingham," cried lady Theodora, in a more serious tone than she had yet assumed, "if you value the peace of Theodora, you will cease to question me upon a subject on which I dare not be more explicit; mention to me the name of Antonia no more, I beseech you: he is unfortunate; and were his sorrows known to you, would be the object of your pity and your compassion, as he is now of mine!"

"Ah! Theodora, pardon me this once, loveliest and adored creature, for disobeying your injunctions," cried Adolphus, now passionately seizing her hand; "but has Antonia no stronger interest in that lovely bosom than compassion?—feels Theodora no warmer sentiment for Antonia?"

Theodora read with astonishment the suspicions that had now entered the imagination of Adolphus: she beheld the conflicts that were passing in his heart, and without a moment's pause, firmly pronounced,

"I call attesting angels to witness! No; I feel no more for Antonia than if I were indeed a sister; and he no more for Theodora than if he were a brother! It is utterly impossible that any warmer sentiment can be exchanged between us than reciprocal confidence and mutual esteem."

“But is there not mystery connected with Antonia?” enquired Adolphus, without relinquishing her snowy hand, which he had now pressed repeatedly to his lips.

And lady Theodora now indignantly snatched away her hand, while she uttered in accents that thrilled the soul of Adolphus,

“Why am I thus questioned,—and by you, Walsingham?”

“Because Walsingham adores you, Theodora; and because——”

“You are jealous of Antonia!” exclaimed lady Theodora. “Indeed, you have but little cause, when I assure you, that long before I beheld Antonia, his heart was safely bestowed, and in the possession of another.”

The countenance of Adolphus now brightened up, and assumed the most rapturous expression; and again seizing the hand she had so indignantly withdrawn, he softly pronounced,

“And in whose possession is the heart of Theodora?”

There was a beautiful arch expression, which had something like cunning in it, when Theodora replied, with a blush which crimsoned both her face and neck,

“In my own, Walsingham; and I will exert the best of my endeavour to keep it there, till I can surrender it to that man who will know how to regard it without suspicion—protect it without jealousy—and give it liberty without fear!”

## CHAPTER LIV.

Not the combined pencil of a Rubens, the divine colouring of a Titian, nor the exquisite and highly finished art of a Correggio, could have done justice to the beautiful blush which "nature's own hand had cunningly laid on," and which was exhibited on the countenance of lady Theodora Percy at the moment she uttered these words spontaneously from a heart pure and faultless as the nature of frail mortality would admit, and Adolphus, no longer cherishing a doubt of her most perfect innocence, in language the most impassioned, ardent, and ingenuous, for the first time pleaded the unconquerable passion she had long retained in his heart, which with a hand he did not now deem wholly unworthy of her acceptance he now laid at her feet.

"Say then, loveliest Theodora," uttered he, "that you will be mine. Give me that blest and enviable title which can alone bind two faithful hearts in confidence, purity, and love; that sacred tie once cemented between us will dispel all future doubt and mystery. Consent to be mine; suffer me to be your faithful guardian, in the endearing character of husband, friend, and lover. Let Walsingham alone be the protector of that unsullied virtue which, not even the power of the most invidious slander can throw a dark shade on or rob of its celestial brightness. Speak, Theodora, make me blest or miserable; your voice alone can now decide the destiny of the Orphan Boy.

Theodora did not affect to be either insensible to the warm attachment she had inspired, or blind to the perfections of such a lover as Adolphus. It was impossible to regard him with indifference at this mature period of their days, whom almost in infancy she had unconsciously loved better than any human being beside ; him for whose sake she had often breathed forth the anguished sigh and in secret dropped the silent tear ; him for whose safety she had never ceased to offer up her prayers ; for whose absence she had mourned incessantly, and at whose return her heart had again beat with the most chaste, delicate, yet lasting passion, and for whom that passion had never been revealed but to one single individual, and that individual was Camilla Grandison. To her sympathising bosom she had alone dared to impart to her long cherished and treasured secret, her love for the poor wronged Orphan Boy ; and it was to Miss Grandison alone that Theodora confessed that no other but Adolphus Walsingham should ever have the possession of her hand and heart. At this period, therefore, it was not likely that he should become an object of indifference, much less of aversion to her, when no obstacle on his part prevented the most lasting engagements to be formed between them.

Notwithstanding all this, Theodora, while she generously acknowledged that her heart was not insensible to his merits, refused to bind herself in any engagements till she considered that she was absolved from the nature of the oath she had so rashly given to lady Austincourt ; nor could all the fond entreaties and earnest persuasions of her passionate and adoring Walsingham, alter her determination, which was that

of never becoming his wife till all mysteries were clearly elucidated, and concealment no longer necessary respecting individuals whose names she was not permitted to disclose, and which it was probable that at some distant period there would no longer be any necessity of keeping from his knowledge ; or in the mysterious light in which they were now considered by him and Sir Mildred Austincourt.

“ Sir Mildred Austincourt ! ” exclaimed Adolphus. “ Ah ! dearest Theodora, and am I then to wait for a distant period before these mysteries can be explained ; and is my uncle also implicated in these fearful doubts, these fatal and accursed mysteries which robs me of my Theodora, and at once dooms me to a state of hopeless anguish and despair. I beseech you to tell me if my uncle can avert the impending blow ? say, would it be permitted to fall, once again, to crush his ill starred nephew. Oh ! if I thought that were the case, again would I fly the roof of Austincourt Priory ; again would I become a wretched outcast, and end my days in cheerless solitary exile, far from Theodora, from ”——

“ Hold ! dearest Walsingham, I implore you,” cried lady Theodora, now bursting into an involuntary flood of tears. “ Cease, I implore you, this unnecessary, this unavailing, trial of my feelings, and patiently abide the severity of that destiny which we cannot sufficiently avoid. Your uncle cannot avert the impending blow you dread ; nor are the mysteries at his command—’tis not in his power to reveal nor prevent their taking place. Consider ’tis I—I have sworn,—not your uncle, never to betray. On me depends the nature of the oath. From that oath I cannot be absolved—Walsingham, I shudder while I



repeat it to you—until the approach of a death bed makes a disclosure necessary.”

“Heavenly Powers! and has that inhuman woman bound you to this, my ‘Theodora,’” exclaimed Adolphus, seizing the now cold and trembling hand of lady Theodora almost frantically to his lips. “Vile sorceress! and whose death bed did she allude to—mine Theodora?”

“No, dearest Walsingham, you had already been her victim.”

“No, it is in the issue of your uncle’s approaching demise or mine that I am to discover certain mysteries, and be absolved from my oath. In the supposition of that awful moment being near at hand I am then permitted to unfold them.”

“Cruel, merciless, unfeeling, and abandoned woman!” uttered Adolphus, “thus to take advantage of the softness of thy gentle nature, and the easy confidence of thy unsuspecting heart. Oh! my Theodora! teach me how to bear this unheard of cruel persecution! yet, dearest angel, wherefore do you hesitate to become the wife of your adoring Walsingham. Whatever be the nature or restrictions of your oath, it has, thank heaven, nothing conclusively to do with your marriage. Ah! why, Theodora, do you refuse to make me blest?”

“Hear me, Walsingham, patiently hear me,” uttered lady Theodora, “after which condemn me if you think proper. What would you say of my deception, if, after I married you, I were to see Antonia in private, write to him in secret, and receive letters of correspondence from him, which I should positively be obliged to answer, and from which my husband

would be withheld from sharing a part, and with which it would be utterly impossible for me to make him acquainted. Say, would your mind be at rest? would you be perfectly satisfied with the conduct of Theodora? All this Theodora must do if she becomes your wife, and yet be strictly honourable and strictly just."

Instantly the before enraptured countenance of Adolphus became inflamed with an expression which too plainly bespoke all the distracting doubts of love and jealousy, and he passionately exclaimed—

"Accurst Antonia! and is it to thee I owe the present disappointment of all my fondest hopes and wishes; but farewell too lovely and beloved Theodora, I submit to the destiny you have imposed. I will not tire you with my presence, nor again urge you on the subject of importunities which you so fervently resist, reject, and it is plain utterly despise."

"Unkind Walsingham?" cried Theodora, "and does the confidence I have just reposed in you merit this return? Wherefore should I now hesitate to pronounce, and that decisively, that I never will become the wife of Walsingham till he utterly abandons these unworthy suspicions from his heart. That Walsingham shall never possess the hand of Theodora till Antonia himself shall prove those suspicions to be false. Meanwhile, Walsingham let us instantly separate till we can meet again on better terms. A time may come when you may repent of your petulance, and be angry with yourself for having given me a second opportunity of discovering the defects of your disposition."

Adolphus, still under the influence of that tormenting fiend, who, having once blindfolded our imagination, does not instantly remove the impenetrable and impervious veil from our deluded eyes, beheld nothing but Antonia conversing in private with Theodora, the subject of which he was forbid to enquire into. He saw nothing but letters addressed to Theodora and written by Antonia, the nature of which he was not to know, and this thought was distraction, and hurried him on even to be guilty of rudeness to Theodora, from whose presence he instantly departed without so much as deigning to reply to her or bidding her farewell, and found himself almost at the gate of Austincourt Priory before this circumstance occurred to his recollection; and the moment it did, it occasioned him to experience a sensation of shame and the most heart-felt regret. The thought of having offended Theodora was sufficient to render him dejected and miserable; but the idea of having acted with rudeness towards her was insupportable, and he would have returned to Heath Cottage and implored her forgiveness, but for the extreme lateness of the hour.

Adolphus once more entered the roof of his uncle with a heart torn by the most conflicting sensations, ashamed of having yielded to the indulgence of them in the presence of her who alone was the cause of them, and yet feeling the impossibility of erasing the image of the lovely tormentor from his heart; and however poets may have feigned that there is only one original of love, those who have experienced its influence in all its pleasing and unpleasing variety, have been obliged to confess that there is at least a thou-

sand copies of it, and may well be illustrated in the following lines from a judicious and celebrated author :

- “ By Nature the source of the passion is given,
- “ By Fancy its object : 'Tis by Vanity nurs'd ;
- “ 'Tis Sympathy makes it the image of Heaven,
- “ By Caprice and by Folly it always is Curs'd.”

If however there is a love pure and exempt from the mixture of other passions, its source must be hidden in the unknown recesses of the heart ; and it is so difficult to define it, that we may pronounce it to be a sympathy, a secret and delicate desire to possess what we admire, a wish to charm, and a hope to reign. All those who know their minds however, do not know their hearts ; and Adolphus felt the full force of this observation, as, entering the apartment usually occupied by Sir Mildred Austincourt, he perceived that his elbow chair was vacant, in which was his constant custom, as well as favorite habit, of reading for an hour before he retired to his chamber ; and expecting to find him in the saloon, he instantly repaired thither for the purpose of inquiring after his beloved uncle, where the following personages were seated at the supper table : lord Villeroy, lady Villeroy, lady Mountsorrel, and Mr. Markland, who saluted Adolphus on his entrance in the following manner :

“ So Mr. Walsingham you are come at last !”

“ And it would have been well if Mr. Walsingham had been here some few hours sooner,” observed lady Mountsorrel (a malicious expression having taken possession of her countenance), “ it might have prevented the very alarming and sudden illness of Sir

Mildred; which certainly was the effect of agitation produced by the paragraph he read in the paper. Now the presence of a relative so tenderly beloved as Mr. Walsingham might have been extremely consolatory in such a moment to his uncle; but what could we do? we were obliged to put him to bed in a state almost of insensibility: he called for his nephew, but that nephew was not to be found: he was paying his duty elsewhere; where doubtless his attentions were more necessary, at the mansion of lady Theodora Percy.

Thunderstruck at hearing intelligence he so little expected, and shocked and alarmed to find that he had been absent, as well as being thus suddenly accused of negligence towards his beloved uncle, he indignantly replied to the unmerited reproach of lady Mountsorrel, —“ To the mansion of lady Theodora Percy I was expressly sent by that uncle towards whom your ladyship so inhumanly taxes me with a want of attention and duty in a moment when it was impossible for me to know of any accident having occurred in my absence, much less that my dear uncle required my attendance or assistance: to have known this, your ladyship must naturally have supposed that I possessed a gift of foresight superior to any human being; but be assured, had I been apprised of any danger or inconvenience attending my beloved and revered uncle, I should have flown hither on the immediate summons, and not considered the presence of lady Theodora Percy as any drawback on those duties, I have ever found it a source of pleasure, as well as being incumbent upon me to discharge towards my venerable and respected relative Sir Mildred Austincourt. Your ladyship's accusation therefore in the present instance

is not only unfounded and ungenerous, but permit me to observe, has not even truth to recommend it in return for so unprecedented a want of feeling."

And Adolphus, not in the least disposed to notice the stern look with which he was now regarded by lord Villeroy, nor to relish a renewal of any conversation with her haughty ladyship, instantly quitted the saloon to make inquiries after the health, as well as to learn the cause of indisposition which had so suddenly affected his uncle, and was almost immediately followed by Mr. Markland into an adjoining apartment; by whom he was presently informed of the whole particulars in the following manner.

"Imagine my surprise my dear boy," uttered he, "when on my return from Avondale, I found my excellent friend incapable of speaking to me: he had been suddenly attacked by a fit of an apoplectic nature, and they were in the act of conveying him to his chamber at the moment of my arrival at the Priory. The cause of which is the following paragraph in the Morning Herald of Yesterday."

Mr. Markland taking a paper from his pocket placed it in the hands of Adolphus, who, with astonished and pained feelings, perused the contents of the paragraph alluded to, which was precisely thus :

### **" FASHIONABLE ELOPEMENT IN HIGH LIFE.**

" Yesterday morning eloped from her splendid and magnificent mansion in Grosvenor Square the beautiful accomplished, and so greatly admired Maria Henrietta, wife of the Hon. Mr. Frederic Augustus Aus-

tincourt, with a well-known and notorious gentleman of the turf. It is reported, that this circumstance has occasioned but small surprise in the fashionable hemisphere, owing to the licentious conduct of this celebrated beauty and the immoral character of her gay deceiver. It is expected that a duel will immediately take place between the injured party and the paramour of the beautiful inconstant."

No sooner had Adolphus finished reading the infamous paragraph than every nerve trembled, and every vein bled in his heart for the wounded feelings of his beloved uncle, and he involuntarily exclaimed,—

"Lead me Mr. Markland, lead me to the presence of my best and worthiest of uncles! Oh! let me fly to console him, and to offer him every mark of the most devoted duty—every proof of the most tender unchanged affection."

And Adolphus arose distractedly from his chair; in which however he was interrupted by Mr. Markland, who assured him, that this was a most unseasonable moment for seeing Sir Mildred, to whom medical restoratives had been administered, with the express orders from the physician, that he should on no account be disturbed: composure being highly necessary to prevent a second return of the indisposition with which he had so suddenly been attacked, the utmost precaution had been taken to prevent the slightest noise from approaching his chamber; and that he had left him in a profound and quiet slumber; from which every possible hope was entertained of his recovery."

Adolphus was now so overpowered by this account of his beloved uncle, and the manner in which Mr.

Markland had related it, that he burst into tears, while he exclaimed,—

“ Oh! may every good and blessed angel watch over him and guard his slumbers; and when he awakes, may he ultimately be benefited from his repose! Oh Mr. Markland! you have no idea how much I love my uncle!”

“ Yes, but I have a pretty near guess,” uttered Mr. Markland, his eyes filling with tears; while he grasped the hand of Adolphus with the fervor of the most undisguised affection, “ I have a pretty near guess my dear boy and respect you all the better for it. You loved him when he happened to care very little about you. A little bird that sings at no great distance from the Priory has put me in possession of all the secrets of the castle: I have a key to all the mystery relating to that shocking affair, the seduction of Fanny Roseberry, and that most shameful profligate her seducer, Mr. Frederic Austincourt, and that determined virago his more shameless mother: I know very well for whose sake you were slandered and driven from the protecting roof of my deceived and misguided friend Sir Mildred: I knew all this when you were absent, and I now welcome your return with the most rapturous congratulations, and most heartily rejoice in your exaltation. As to Frederic, what could such a scoundrel expect after having wounded the heart, and ruined the reputation, of an innocent woman? Did he imagine that his own would be at rest, or that he would ultimately escape from the punishment due to such a crime? Did he suppose that the vengeance of Almighty Providence would slumber for his sake more than for that of others? No indeed, he could not



expect it; or if he did, he has been woefully deceived. As to the little fly-blow on his conjugal felicity, I am not in the least surprised at it, when he entered into a matrimonial connexion with a woman little better than a courtesan, whose morals were already contaminated by the pernicious counsels of an abandoned and profligate mother; whose example she followed; and by whom she was educated in the very school of licentiousness, Italy."

"Italy!" exclaimed Adolphus, recoiling from the very sound as if a serpent had crossed his imagination, "was the wife of Frederic a native of Italy?"

To which Mr. Markland replied,—

"No, but her mother was; and it is much the same thing: she had imbibed all the principles and habits of that dangerous and seductive country while on a visit with the signiora, who had formed improper intimacy with one of the Italian noblesse; by whom she was presented with a magnificent establishment on terms the most disgraceful and shocking to female delicacy: and it was with such a mother that Maria Henrietta was educated. On her return to England, her beauty, aided by superior art (in which she was dexterously skilled by her designing mother) gained her the possession of innumerable admirers; and among the number of the most passionate and subdued captives to her all-powerful attractions was Frederic Austincourt, who married her. No sooner however was he delighted at the torch of Hymen, than he discovered that all were not angels who wore an angel's form; and that his Maria Henrietta was nothing more than a profligate and a wanton: and the consequences which it was natural to suppose would result from such

a union have successively followed. Now, though I am sorry, nay, inexpressibly grieved, that this accident should have so powerfully affected the feelings of my worthy old friend, yet, I have really no compassion for the situation in which it has placed Frederic, as it is a just punishment for the miseries he has heaped on the heads of others. Had he never deserted poor Fanny there might have been something said to palliate his indiscretion, and I should now feel for his domestic misfortune; but I positively can neither respect, nor pity the sorrows of that man, who could wantonly betray a female to dishonor, and then abandon her to the reproaches of her own conscience and the un pitying scorn of her merciless and rancorous enemies."

Adolphus listened with the most profound attention to the communication so obligingly offered to him by Mr. Markland, in whom, he discerned a man of the most extraordinary abilities, although accompanied with some excentricities of character; yet a benevolent heart, like the bright beaming sun, shone conspicuously through the whole, and finished the portrait of a good man. Still Adolphus could not avoid bestowing some thought on the situation of the wretched Frederic; and the idea of his life being at last sacrificed by the misconduct of an unworthy woman, made him express his fears and apprehensions to Mr. Markland, that Frederic might fall by a duel; and intreated him to suggest some means by which such a calamitous circumstance, every way so shocking to the feelings of a father, might be prevented. At which Mr. Markland smiled, and involuntarily exclaimed,

"Fall by a fiddle de dee! My dear Walsingham, I thought you had known your cousin Frederic better.

No, take my word for it, Frederic will never fight. The man who is coward enough to injure and betray a helpless woman, will never meet a man of honor or courage if there is a possibility of avoiding such an encounter you may safely rely upon it. No, he will be very glad to get rid of his Maria Henrietta as soon as he can on the only terms that are now left : he will sue for a divorce as speedily as possible, which there is no doubt but he will as speedily obtain ; and by this means emancipate himself from slavery. Had I such a wife, I should have thanked my fortunate stars to have been relieved from such a troublesome bargain."

Adolphus could not resist smiling at Mr. Markland's remark in spite of his utmost efforts to prevent risibility, and added,

" But my dear sir, you would not have liked to have parted with a wife on such terms, would you ? "

" I do not know," answered Mr. Markland: " If I had married such a woman I should have expected it."

An old and faithful domestic of Sir Mildred's now put his head in at the door, and without ceremony, joyfully exclaimed,—

" God be thanked ! my honored master is better : he has had a comfortable sleep ; is now awake ; and is desirous of seeing Mr. Walsingham immediately."

" Let us both instantly attend him," cried Mr. Markland ; and they immediately followed old Gregory to the chamber of Sir Mildred Austincourt.

## CHAPTER LV.

Adolphus on approaching the bedside of his uncle was shocked at the change which only a few hours had produced in a countenance, which, at other times, always bespoke cheerfulness and serenity; grief, and a peculiar expression of impatient anxiety, were now strongly marked in his features; and in a voice languid and mournful he exclaimed to Adolphus as he drew near to him with the tenderest inquiries after his health,—

“ Why better dear Dolphy, much better; but I have been much shocked by the intelligence I yesterday received, and felt for Frederic what perhaps he never felt for me: but I am his father: I have always acted like one towards him, and I cannot now be insensible to his misfortunes, or rejoice at his sufferings.”

To which Adolphus, taking the hand of Sir Mildred and pressing it to his lips, replied,—

“ Heaven forbid my dear uncle that any one should rejoice at the misfortunes of another: and I am too well acquainted with the sensibility of your own excellent heart not to imagine what your feelings must sustain on this distressing occasion. For my own part, I have long forgiven Frederic the injury he once did me, and could any assistance of mine be availing, would most willingly tender him an offer of my services.”

“ Ah! my dear Dolphy! you do not know the excess of misery into which Frederic is plunged by his unfortunate marriage with this abandoned woman,” cried Sir Mildred, raising himself on his pillow and speak-

ing in a more firm and elevated tone than he had yet done, "it is not sufficient that she has disgraced the name of Austincourt and dishonored her husband, but she found means to plunder him of his effects and property: Frederic is a ruined man nephew! Long have I borne the consequence of his imprudent connexion with this Italian Circe with a patient shrug, and long have I known of his embarrassments; but I was not prepared for this finishing stroke to the sum of his affairs: I may endure poverty; I can bear affliction, when it has pleased the hand of Providence to heap it on my devoted head; but I cannot support disgrace and infamy!"

"With which you have no concern my worthiest friend!" exclaimed Mr. Markland, who had seated himself near Sir Mildred on the opposite side to that where Adolphus was placed, "and with which you cannot charge yourself with the smallest part. Therefore I intreat you to be composed and listen to reason, listen to friendship. Frederic has brought this misfortune upon himself; therefore no one is answerable for his conduct: and perhaps it is such as Providence is pleased to visit him with; we cannot see into futurity, nor must we murmur at its decrees."

"It is true exclaimed Sir Mildred, while excessive agitation marked every feature and greatly alarmed Adolphus, "it is all true Markland, but this is no moment for evasion, when I know not how soon I may be summoned before that awful tribunal, at which all concealments must be revealed: why therefore should I hesitate to confess that I have loved Frederic, even with his faults, much better than the rest of my children, by having permitted him to make a beggar of his

father. Markland, in the presence of my nephew I now grieve to say, that Frederic has, by his own involvements, greatly embarrassed me. I do not think that after my demise there will be a shilling left for my poor Edmund and his sisters. And this is not all, I have now in my cabinet an unanswered letter of Frederic's, where he advises me to apply for pecuniary reimbursements to lady Theodora Percy; 'whose purse,' he observes, 'is large enough to support us all, and whose generosity was boundless. Besides, he added that he had claims on Theodora which no one knew of but himself, claims which she dare not disown; and that he expected I should immediately apply to her and remit him a supply to recruit his finances. You may suppose with what disgust I received this letter, for I never answered it; and respecting Theodora I have ever been silent: she has imprudently involved herself in some mystery (which, I understand, was before the death of lady Austincourt) the nature of which, she either does not choose, or dare not make me acquainted with: this, together with some observations that I made of certain characters who accompanied her from Italy, has occasioned a coldness between us.'

Sir Mildred now sunk almost breathless on his pillow, and for the remainder of the night was unfit for further conversation with his beloved nephew, who retired only to an adjoining apartment with Mr. Markland; where they determined to watch throughout the night. Adolphus felt no disposition to sleep in the agonizing state of his present feelings; which were greatly augmented by the disclosure of his uncle's affairs and the increased mysteries which involved the conduct of lady Theodora Percy, whom he yet loved

with the most unabated ardour of affection. In short, Adolphus felt the necessity of coming to an arrangement of his own affairs, and to offer assistance to his uncle as he might require it; and he conceived it only his duty to give to the protector of his infancy and the brother of his mother. Of the property bequeathed to him by the generosity of Miss Grandison he had not yet received a shilling; the whole of which exceeded ten thousand pounds, including her family mansion in Wales; which Adolphus, before he learned the embarrassment of his uncle, predetermined to present as a gift to his beloved Edmund; and he resolved, that even now, he would not give up that intention. But Adolphus was possessed of other sums which he had accumulated, with the most persevering industry, during his partnership in the concern of Leonard Morrison; and with these he determined to part for the relief and necessities of his uncle. Well knowing that the property left him by Camilla Grandison was lodged in such sufficient hands, that he could draw for the whole at the shortest notice, besides some rents in Wales which were yet unpaid. All these reflections served to occupy the mind of Adolphus while Mr. Markland alternately slept and watched by his side. And as Gregory constantly brought reports to them of Sir Mildred, that he was better and now profoundly sleeping, they took coffee, and conversed without any interruption till daylight began to peep through the windows.

Mr. Markland however had not failed to expatiate greatly on the vile misconduct of Frederic Austincourt; of his wanton depravity in persuading his father to borrow money to supply his wants from the purse of

lady Theodora Percy, and of the deplorable state to which he had reduced and squandered away the property of that father, already too blind to his failings and too indulgent to his faults.

"But what has he to do with that angel? that is what I want to know," continued Mr. Markland, fixing his eyes with a peculiar and marked expression on the flushed cheeks of Adolphus as he made the enquiry; who replied, but with some degree of embarrassment—

"What angel, Sir?"

And Mr. Markland immediately retorted—

"That is an excellent joke, by Jove! then you do not know the angel I allude to. You are inconceivably dull, I must needs own, Mr. Walsingham; want of sleep has rendered your wits somewhat muddy, I must therefore repeat what has such a character as Frederic Austincourt to do with such an angel as lady Theodora Percy!"

"That, Sir, I do not know," answered Adolphus in the utmost confusion.

"But cannot you guess?" cried Mr. Markland impatiently, and not removing his expressive eye from the countenance of Adolphus, who after a short pause, answered—

"I believe Mr. Markland, I almost fear that lady Theodora's well known generosity of character has been greatly imposed on by the deceptive arts of the Austincourt family, and by which she has been unwarily drawn into the knowledge of some mysterious affair which she is bound in honour, perhaps by an oath the most sacred, to hold secret."

"I suspect as much," cried Mr. Markland, "and



in short I have lately began to suspect something else relative to that sweet creature, and which I dare not repeat to you, fearful you should blow out my brains!" and Mr. Markland burst into an immoderate fit of laughter at the amazed and almost petrified countenance of Adolphus, who in alarmed accents exclaimed—

"Tell me, Sir, for heaven's sake, what you suspect of lady Theodora Percy!"

To which Mr. Markland replied—

"Why I believe, Sir, that my suspicions will stand the test of the strictest investigation, when I positively declare to you that I have discovered an important secret—she is passionately in love! and I have discovered the object of that passion without being a conjurer—his name is"—

Adolphus feeling a return of all his old sensations, and dreading to hear the name of Antonia pronounced by Mr. Markland, exclaimed—

"If the name is a disagreeable one, Sir, forbear to mention it—I do not wish to hear it."

Mr. Markland now laughed heartily, and grasping the hand of Adolphus, exclaimed—

"Trifles light as air, are to the jealous

"Confirmation, strong as proofs

"From holy writ."

"No, Sir, the name I mean is by no means a disagreeable one, and by your leave I will mention it, though you should faint at the sound. What think you of Adolphus Walsingham!"

"Mr. Markland, you will think me a very foolish

fellow," returned Adolphus, returning his grasp of friendship the moment he had relieved his fears.

To which Mr. Markland replied—

"No, my dear boy, but I should think you a very insensible one if you could look at lady Theodora Percy, and afterwards pronounce that you did not love her! Why I love her, and every body loves her. No, no, I mistake, lady Mountsorrel and lady Ville-roy do not love her; and why they do not does not remain a parable. She is a brilliant star, over which they cannot throw a dark cloud. She is a flower in a lonely desert—there is none resembles her. There is a fragrance in her smiles wafting odours sweeter than the balmy breath of roses; and her voice—

"Comes o'er the ear, like the sweet South

"Breathing from a bank of violets!

But don't be jealous of me, Walsingham, I have no design on lady Theodora's heart; or if I had, I have a shrewd guess that I must send my arrows through yours, for it is safe in your possession."

Adolphus looked transported at the thought; notwithstanding which he was profoundly silent on the merits of Theodora, leaving Mr. Markland to form what conclusions he thought proper as to the situation of his heart.

While they each retired to their respective chambers in order to take some necessary repose, having first paid their duty to Sir Mildred, who declared that he felt himself considerably better; in which supposition they were not deceived, for the physician in the course of that day did not hesitate to pronounce Sir Mildred out of danger, to the no small joy of his

faithful and attached domestics, and the rapturous congratulations of all his friends. Not indeed that he was yet permitted to leave his chamber, but he was enabled to converse without that impatient and restless anxiety he had exhibited through the first stages of his indisposition ; and it is possible, that as he had obtained several private conversations with Adolphus, his mind was considerably relieved.

Meanwhile the guests at Austincourt Priory went on in their usual way of amusing themselves without consulting any body's taste or humour but their own. Lord Villeroy continued to be the humble and passionate adorer of the charms of the bewitching lady Mountsorrel ; and lady Mountsorrel continued to torment by every species of coquetry in her power her captive lord and slave.

A letter had also been dispatched to a certain fair personage not many miles distant from the Priory, informing her of the state of Sir Mildred's health, and the domestic misfortune of Frederic, which was quickly answered, not by the return of the messenger, but with lady Theodora herself. Adolphus received her from her carriage with a trembling hand and a transported countenance, and as he conducted her to the chamber of his uncle, softly whispered—

“ Oh, Theodora ! loveliest creature, do you pardon and forgive my rash and impetuous disposition, which made me guilty even of rudeness towards you when last we met ? By Heaven I never more will offend ! never again cherish such impressions. Say you forgive me Theodora, and”—

“ You will not do so again till a future opportunity,” exclaimed Theodora, with a smile so truly and

bewitchingly lovely, that Adolphus caught the snowy hand that was half yielded for his acceptance, and pressed it fervently to his lips, while he passionately repeated—

“No I will never again betray such marks of folly, Theodora. I will not by that bright and blessed planet that now surrounds us.”

It was certainly a case in point. The moon was then shining with her soft resplendent light on the turrets of the Priory.

Lady Theodora repeated the following passage from *Romeo and Juliet* with the most inexpressible harmony and beauty:—

“Swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,

“That monthly changes in her circled orb,

“Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.”

Adolphus was about to reply to the lovely and irresistible speaker, when steps were heard advancing towards them. It was lord Villeroy and Mr. Markland. The former rested his eyes for a moment on the face of Theodora, and started with involuntary surprise, while he exclaimed—

“By Heavens! the same sweet creature that I encountered this morning in the Woodman’s hut!”

“It is lady Theodora Percy,” softly whispered Mr. Markland, and taking the arm of lord Villeroy, they proceeded hastily along the corridore.

## CHAPTER LVI.

Whether the exclamation of lord Willeroy had reached the ear of the then highly happy and transported Adolphus, or the sentence which afterwards followed from the lips of Markland remained a secret, for his heart beat with rapture, and his countenance was expressive of the tumultuous feelings which reigned within; nor did the roseate blush which mantled in crimson hue the fair cheek of the lovely Theodora, prove that she was insensible to the warm praises of her passionate lover, as they entered together, arm in arm, the chamber of Sir Mildred, who now, placed in an easy chair, seemed not only free from the effects of his late severe indisposition, but disposed to indulge in cheerful and enlivening conversation, every precaution being observed not to agitate his feelings by adverting to the subject of Frederic's domestic misfortune. At length, after a painfully suppressed sigh, Sir Mildred turned towards lady Theodora and exclaimed—

“ I suppose, my dear girl, that Dolphy has told you all about Frederic's misfortune?”

To which lady Theodora, taking the hand of Sir Mildred and pressing it to her lips, replied with an air of the most compassionate kindness—

“ Why I will not pretend to say that he has not; but positively I will not hear you say any thing on that subject unless you wish to banish me from your presence an hour sooner than I intended to go. I

know very well that Frederic has lost a wife in a way not the most pleasant to his feelings ; but these are " accidents that will happen in the best regulated families," as the play says.

Sir Mildred shook his head, and forcing a melancholy smile, observed—

" No, dearest Theodora ! they are such accidents that will never happen in a well regulated family, which I grieve to say Frederic's was not. He was so infatuated as to leave the whole government of his affairs in the hands of an abandoned woman, and now too late I fear repents of his folly."

To which lady Theodora immediately answered—

" But, dear Sir, if we cannot govern ourselves, it is morally impossible to suppose that we shall be able to succeed in our attempt to govern others. What right have we to expect it ? however we won't talk of one another's failings, unless we feel inclined to correct our own ; and I am in no humour to be angry with myself at this time, when I have the inexpressible happiness of seeing you so much recovered from your indisposition."

Theodora uttered these words with such enchanting sweetness, that Sir Mildred, casting on her a look of the warmest approbation, exclaimed—

" Theodora you have a method of creeping into hearts totally different to every other person, has not the nephew ?"

This was a most unfortunate appeal made to Adolphus, for he blushed a colour of the deepest dye, well knowing that he had affected an indifference to the bewitching manners of Theodora, which had always been more particularly marked when in the presence

of his uncle ; but this was no moment for evasion, and he felt so completely happy in the transporting thought that he at last possessed the entire affections of this lovely creature, that glancing towards her with a rapturous smile, he exclaimed—

“ She has indeed, Sir, a magnetic influence, and I have long felt the power of her enchanting spells.”

“ But some hearts would rather be bound in slavery than be free,” cried Sir Mildred ; “ and I think, Dolphy, that is precisely the case with yours.”

“ Walsingham I will thank you to order my carriage,” cried lady Theodora, with a face covered with blushes. “ There is no standing this invasion of compliment ; when the advance of the enemy is so insidious, one does not know when we may be obliged to retreat.”

“ To surrender you mean, you little gipsey,” cried Sir Mildred, “ for I think that is a much more probable conclusion of the engagement between two such hearts as those of Adolphus Walsingham and Theodora Percy, neither of which appears to be impregnable.”

Adolphus looked too transported to utter a word ; and Theodora contrived to conceal her blushes beneath the shade of a large straw bonnet, which completely hid from observation her lovely and bewitching features. The carriage having drawn up, she arose to depart, having bade Sir Mildred a kind adieu, with a promise of repeating her visit very shortly, and actually had retreated as far as the door, when she suddenly quitted the arm of her conductor and tripped back to Sir Mildred, presenting him with a sealed paper, which she drew from beneath her scarf, and without waiting to hear a single sentence,

she hurried Adolphus down the staircase, bowed to Mr. Markland, who had stationed himself at the entrance of the hall, and sprang into the carriage with the light-footed nimbleness of a fairy; which immediately drove off from the gates of the priory.

Lord Villeroy, however, had been drawn to the window, as well as Angelina, by motives expressly opposite to each other; for, in the former, there was a predominant curiosity, which, in spite of the invidious glances of lady Mountsorrel, he could not divest himself of, to behold again lady Theodora Percy; and in his amiable little sister, it was involuntary respect and admiration for an object she had always held in esteem and veneration, and for more reasons than one, was very desirous of renewing an acquaintance with. Meanwhile, poor Rebecca Mantle did not dare to stir from her seat, nor yet remove her eyes from a silk purse she was netting for her beautiful mistress, who sat in sullen and indignant silence by the side of her *chere amie*, the dear, kind consoling, and always accommodating lady Villeroy, who never offended, because she invariably copied the propensities, let them be ever so absurd, or highly ridiculous, of the divine Elinor: she had observed the almost electric motion of lord Villeroy as he flew towards the window when lady Theodora was getting into her carriage, as also the fond impatient anxiety of Angelina to obtain a glance of her so greatly admired friend. And lady Villeroy, who had nothing to employ her time but by incessantly watching the looks and actions of others, could not let even the poor silent Rebecca Mantle pass unnoticed in the calculations of her ladyship's alert observations: she must watch her too: in order to do which, she was



obliged to peep under her dark eyelashes (for Rebecca had fine dark eyes, although she apparently had red hair), and lady Villeroy thought she could discover in those eyes a glistening tear, which fell in silence, but without sympathy from lady Villeroy. It was very strange, she thought, that Rebecca Mantle should shed a tear, whose situation was so enviable. The companion of the divine Elinor shed a tear! It was very mysterious; and turning with a look of severity towards her daughter, she exclaimed,—

“Upon my word, I protest that the sight of lady Theodora Percy has occasioned some peculiar symptoms of curiosity and of anxiety, which is all wonderfully strange. You, my lord Villeroy, must needs fly to the window to obtain a glance of her ladyship! You, Miss Villeroy, were doubtless equally anxious: and here is Miss Mantle, absolutely crying because she could not see this extraordinary phænomenon. I protest, that I think you all amazingly ridiculous. I should not put myself to the smallest inconvenience to behold lady Theodora Percy, I promise you.”

Lady Mountsorrel, regarding the really tearful eyes of Rebecca with a look of the most supercilious scorn, burst into a loud malicious laugh, not deigning to inquire into the cause of her uneasiness. Lord Villeroy looked at his mother with an air of displeasure, and at lady Mountsorrel with surprise. While Angelina, pitying the feelings of her favorite Rebecca and resentfully blushing, exclaimed,—

“I could not possibly conceive my dear mamma that you could feel displeased at my going to the window to look at lady Theodora when my brother was there at the same instant; and as to Miss Mantle, I

don't in the least wonder at her eyes being full of tears, she is in so much pain : she has been complaining all day of the effects of a most distracting tooth-ache. Have not you Miss Mantle?"

To which Miss Mantle coolly replied, but not removing her eyes from her work,—

"Yes Miss Villeroy, I am really at this moment suffering from the effects of pain, which I just now found to be intolerable. I did not however wish to trouble any one with my complaints ; and feel infinitely obliged to you for the kind anxiety you have expressed on my account."

Lady Villeroy now really looked ashamed at the gentle reproof of her amiable child, for which she determined to give her a lecture at some more convenient opportunity ; and turning to Miss Mantle, with an air of affected kindness, she exclaimed,—

"Poor dear Miss Mantle ! and so you have got the tooth-ache ! Well, I am excessively sorry I assure you. If I had known it I would not have said a word to distress you ; on the contrary, I beg you will make use of my medicine chest : you will find something in it that will immediately give you relief."

To which Miss Mantle replied with a peculiarly marked expression,—

"I thank your ladyship, but there is no medicine which can at present relieve me : patience is my best remedy, and I must try its power."

Whether at this moment the tones in Rebecca's voice were more than usually pathetic, or that they seemed more melodious, or from some cause which could not at present be easily accounted for, but lord Villeroy seemed electrified at the sound of that voice

he had hitherto been wholly indifferent to ; and looking at Miss Mantle, with an air of astonishment, he exclaimed,—

“ Rebecca, if I did not know that the thing was impossible, I should have imagined that you were inspired with that voice from the mouldering ashes of her who has long since been consigned to the dust, for never did I listen to such familiar tones.”

Lady Villeroy looked reproachfully at her son, as lady Mountsorrel appeared highly displeased with his familiar conversation with her companion, whom she never treated but as a servant, and exclaimed,—

“ I protest Charles you have taken leave of your senses ; for the person you allude to, and who has been dead a considerable length of time, had not in the first place, the smallest resemblance to Miss Mantle, for she was considered extremely beautiful ; and then she had so remarkable a voice, that—— that”——

“ I never heard any voice but Miss Mantle’s that so remarkably resembled it,” cried lord Villeroy, with a deeply suppressed sigh, and a considerable silence ensued ; during which, Miss Mantle quietly putting away her knitting, arose, and with a respectful courtesy, quitted the room at the same instant that Adolphus and Mr. Markland entered it ; and the latter seating himself without ceremony, very deliberately took a paper from his pocket and read over a list of names, among which were the following :—Sir Mildred Austincourt ; lord Villeroy ; lady Villeroy ; Miss Villeroy ; lady Mountsorrel ; Adolphus Walsingham :—

“ And lady Theodora Percy,” exclaimed Mr. Markland. “ What an angel ! she has liberally subscribed the sum of two hundred pounds to relieve the distresses

of the poor in the neighbourhood of Heathwood, besides having daily administered to their sufferings herself, her very sweet self; with her own hands has she carried provisions to the sick, the aged, and the infirm! What do your ladyships now think of lady Theodora Percy?"

Lady Mountsorrel preserved the most contemptuous silence. Ever since Adolphus had retorted on her ladyship's severity she had been particularly guarded in her speech, or in making any pointed remarks on the conduct of lady Theodora for reasons most potent, and which were for the present locked up in her secret repository of thoughts; while lady Villeroy replied to Mr. Markland in the following manner:—

"You are prodigiously fond of applying to me Mr. Markland, though I dare say you do not care ~~me~~ for my opinion than any other person's; and I shall give it you without fear, or having respect for any personages whatever, who may not choose to relish my sentiments (here lady Villeroy glanced most maliciously towards Adolphus, who was playing with Sambo, and alternately conversing with Miss Villeroy, to whom he always paid the most respectful attention). In regard to lady Theodora's very liberal contributions, I do not see any thing so very extraordinary in such marks of her liberality, when it is considered that she is in the possession of such immense property: she can afford to be liberal; and I am sure she makes herself very ridiculous and very conspicuous in her manner of bestowing it. Did ever any body hear of a personage of her exalted rank going into filthy cottages and taking dirty little brats out of their beastly beds to examine whether they have got the fever, on purpose

will give a patient hearing at all events to your romantic and interesting cottage tale; which I dare say will be found to be highly amusing. Cannot you introduce a knight-errant too, and a lady of the lake, to finish your adventures."

Although this was uttered with a most invidious side glance towards Adolphus, he did not choose to regard or notice it; as he so far entered into her ladyship's feelings, that he did not completely relish the warm eulogiums which lord Villéroy had so passionately pronounced on the merits of lady Theodora Percy, which he could have dispensed with altogether from the mouth of such a notorious admirer of female perfection as his lordship.

Meanwhile, Markland, who had actually been personating Marplot, in the comedy of the busy body, was almost convulsed with laughter behind the chair of Miss Villeroy, who could scarce preserve her gravity at the gestures he made, at having introduced a scene of such extraordinary novelty; as lady Villeroy had taken a bottle of aromatic perfume, which she was holding to the delicate nose of her beloved Elinor, while her displeased lover addressed her in the following manner.

"The approach of the violent tempest lady Mountsorrel which assailed me this morning on my intended journey to Avondale induced me to take shelter in a woodman's hut in the neighbouring forest. On my entrance I was attracted by the neatness and cleanliness of its humble inhabitants, which consisted of the following personages: an old woman approaching to seventy sat spinning at a wheel with all the cheerfulness, though not the activity of youth; while a

younger one, whose pale and delicate looks pronounced her to be an invalid, was seated in a large elbow chair near to the blazing embers of a wood fire. In the opposite corner my attention was directed to the most interesting sight imaginable; it was the figure of a youthful female, in whose arms an infant was sleeping, and whose little cherub face rested on a bosom more white and transparent than the snowy blossoms of May. A grey mantle, which was partly thrown off her shoulders for the convenience of nursing the infant, discovered the correspondent beauty of her form; and although her features were delicate, concealed under a large straw hat, they were at moments so perceptible, as to discover a face of uncommon loveliness to my observation. I could not for a moment imagine that the object before me was the mother of the sleeping innocent, or that she was an inhabitant of so lowly an hut, and my curiosity led me to make an inquiry of the old woman, in whose hands I deposited some silver as return for her civility, and she answered me in the following terms:

“ ‘ Sir, she is our benefactress, and the friend of the poor, and we do not know her by any other title.’ ”

“ ‘ And that is the best title, and the most flattering one you could give her,’ uttered I, ‘ had she the rank of a duchess, or the title of a queen.’ ”

“ ‘ Ah sir! there would not be so many complaints of poverty in the land if that were the case,’ returned the old woman, ‘ for she would make every body happy round her.’ ”

“ ‘ And that is the only purpose for which kings and queens should reign over us, retorted I.’ ”

“ ‘ Yes sir, but they don’t always keep up to that

golden rule,' replied the old woman, shaking her head in a very significant manner. ' But that lovely lady sir is better than a queen to us ; for she comes every day in the blessed week to see whether we have got a meal's victuals. There's my poor Nanny that you see sitting by the fire, she has had the fever sir that has taken off so many poor souls at Heathwood ; and both she and her little baby would have died for want of nourishment, while they lay so sadly sick, if it had not been for the charitable kindness of that sweet lady ; for I could not do much for my poor daughter sir, I am old and feeble ; and her husband had the misfortune to go to sea and was drowned : but now Nanny is getting better and her baby too.' .

" ' And' has the prettiest nurse imaginable,' cried I.

" ' Ah ! sir, she minds no more nursing of it than I do : she will sit for an hour or two with little Harry on her lap, though she has got such a fine lace gown on.' "

Little Harry now awoke, and the old woman took him from the arms of his beautiful nurse, with whom I entered into conversation of a most interesting kind, and soon discovered the quality, but not the name of the lovely benefactress.' The tempest having subsided, she arose to depart, slipping into the hands of the old woman her customary donation. ' You have the power madam,' cried I, ' of concealing every thing but your perfections.' A modest blush, and a graceful courtesy was all the reply that I received to my compliment ; and she vanished in a moment : but not before she had left behind her, by the meekest accident, the following specimen of her poetical and tasteful composition."

The old woman found it in the chair she had quitted, and lord Villeroi read aloud the following lines, in spite of the malicious looks of his indignant mother, the envious sneers of lady Mountsorrel, and the no very highly gratified, or pleased sensations of Adolphus Walsingham.

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### *THE WOODCUTTER.\**

Hail to thy sunny face! thou man of toil!  
And morn's first blessing cheer thy native soil!  
Thy rugged hands bespeak thee what thou art!  
Thy honest face proclaims an honest heart,  
Well worthy of thy gains!

Hard labour o'er thy hoary head has past;  
But sweet reward shall crown thy work at last!  
Yet by those cheerful smiles which now appear,  
That cheek was never wet by sorrow's tear,  
Son of the rustic plains!

Well can'st thou tread the thicket's thorny way!  
Direct the traveller, if led astray,  
Safe to thy cottage when the tempest low'rs:  
Invite him home from the inclement show'rs,  
And place him by thy fire!

Thy old wife Meg brings forth a jug of ale!  
While thou thyself relate some merry tale;  
And bid thy Meg, who chuckling at thy side,  
As good a bed as she can make, provide!  
What more can guest desire?



These are thy joys old honest rustic, these !  
 And these thy actions, ever sure to please !  
 Beyond what pride, what pomp, or wealth can give,  
 Is honest Industry, by which we live :—

Blest be the hallow'd shrine !

That shrine, at which, the woodman breathes his pray'r,  
 Still to defend his cot from worldly care ;  
 From proud oppression ; and from deadly hate ;  
 From all these ills avert the woodman's fate.  
 And make this prayer mine !

“ There lady Mountsorrel,” cried lord Villeroy, carefully folding up the paper written in lady Theodora's hand-writing and replacing it in his pocket-book, “ is precisely the history and conclusion of the cottage tale ; in which, I have the honor of being the knight-errant, and lady Theodora the lovely lady of the lake. ‘ I have a plain unvarnished tale delivered,’ and now claim a smile from your ladyship to reward me for my pains.”

“ Bravo ! bravo ! my lord,” cried Markland, who now stole from behind Miss Villeroy's chair, “ and I am sure there is no lady here who will refuse a smile to such a tale ; and I exclaim in the words of lord Randolph,—

‘ Was ever tale with such gallantry reherrsed ? ’ ”

But to the no small astonishment of all present, lady Mountsorrel fell into a violent fit of hysterics ; and lady Villeroy, in compliment to her divine Elinor, immediately fainted away ; and a scene of confusion

ensued which baffled all description. Mr. Markland flew to the assistance of lady Villeroy, and Adolphus to that of lady Mountsorrel, for lord Villeroy was absolutely transfixed in amazement; and Angelina, not knowing whether to laugh or to cry, remained quietly standing by his side.

The bell was rung for Rebecca Mantle immediately to come to the assistance of her lady, and she instantly arrived with a fresh supply of hartshorn, lavender drops, aromatic vinegar, and every other restorative necessary for a fainting and hysteric lady. Meanwhile Adolphus had applied himself very sedulously to the recovery of his fair charge, and Markland as sedulously to his, to whom he quickly administered a very copious draught of brandy which stood in a decanter on the table, while Angelina artlessly exclaimed—

“Miss Mantle had you not better give lady Mountsorrel some brandy too. I know it will do her good, because I have seen her take it a good many times.”

“Oh! by all means Miss Mantle administer to her ladyship this relief,” cried Mr. Markland. “It is an excellent remedy for hysteric ladies.”

Miss Mantle, however, was now bathing her ladyship’s temples with vinegar, and could not find a handkerchief immediately ready to bind them up. Adolphus, drawing from his pocket the very identical one which Rebecca had dropped in the Park, now presented it in his hurry to her assistance, while he added—

“Here is a handkerchief,” Miss Mantle, which I believe belongs to”——

“Somebody, Sir, but not to me,” instantly replied Miss Mantle, turning as pale as ashes, and trembling

so excessively that she could scarcely stand. "That handkerchief won't do, it is too small; and Adolphus was just going to replace it in his pocket, unable to guess at the extraordinary emotion of Rebecca Mantle, when Angelina slipped it out of his hand, and spreading it on the table, exclaimed—

"Small! why it is excessively large; and only look what a pretty name is marked at one corner of it, 'Rosella Aubrey.'"

Instantly lord Villeroy started with shocked and involuntary surprise, and darting forward grasped at the handkerchief, while he exclaimed—

"Rosella Aubrey! said you Angelina? Impossible! it is utterly impossible! it cannot be!"

To which Angelina, holding out the handkerchief, replied—

"Dear me, brother, cannot you see; it is Rosella Aubrey as plain as possible, and marked with black hair."

On these words lord Villeroy made but one involuntary motion, and that was to snatch the handkerchief out of the hands of his sister, and immediately to disappear with it.

"My brother is certainly bewitched," exclaimed Miss Villeroy, and turned towards Miss Mantle, who was much nearer to fainting than any one else had been. My gracious Heavens! Miss Mantle, what is the matter with you?"

Rebecca made no reply—but she had caught the attention of Mr. Markland, who exclaimed—

"Why, upon my honour and credit, my dear Miss Villeroy, I think we are all bewitched. Lord Villeroy is bewitched—lady Villeroy is bewitched—lady

Mountsorrel is bewitched—and something has bewitched poor dear little Rebecca too. Egad I think we have all been performing, not in the Comedy, but in the Tragedy of Errors! what say you, Walsingham?"

Adolphus not knowing how to account for the agitation of Miss Mantle, and yet feeling most compassionately for her situation, at the same time he felt convinced there was some mystery attached to the handkerchief, knew not what apology to offer for having so unintentionally pained her feelings, and approaching her, in a whisper repeated—

"Fear nothing—I will not betray you to lord Villeroy! Whatever be the consequence, rely on my fidelity."

The countenance of Rebecca instantly brightened up; she gave a look of gratitude to Adolphus, and by the time that lady Mountsorrel had thought proper to open her eyes, had recovered her self-possession.

"Where is that monster?" uttered she.

"Gone to carve on every tree

"The fair, the chaste, the inexpressive she."

exclaimed Mr. Markland. "He is by this time in the 'Forest of Arden' in search of his Rosalind."

"Barbarian!" exclaimed lady Mountsorrel.

"Ungrateful viper!" uttered lady Villeroy.

"Blow blow thou winter's wind,

"Thou art not so unkind

"As man's ingratitude."

cried Markland, assuming a theatrical tone and attitude. Walsingham, let's you and I make an honour-

able retreat, though we have not been so fortunate as to obtain a victory."

"Mr. Markland it is highly necessary for you and Mr. Walsingham to leave the room," cried lady Villeroy. "Elinor, dear love, let us retire sweetest."

"We will dearest!" replied lady Mountsorrel. "Mantle ring the bell for candles."

The order was immediately obeyed; and Adolphus and Mr. Markland having wished their ladyships most sincerely a *bon repôt* after their extraordinary fatigue, were hastily retreating towards the door, when Mr. Markland suddenly turned round, and crossing his hands over his breast, repeated—

"Adieu thou couple of incomparables! sublime lady Villeroy! divine lady Mountsorrel! May your slumbers be guarded by a legion of angels; and yet while I gaze thus on your beauteous faces, I could say, that—

"Parting is such sweet sorrow,

"That I could say good night till it were morrow."

Adolphus, now almost convulsed with laughter, forcibly drew him out of the room, bowing respectfully to all the ladies, who in retiring to their respective chambers, suffered the curtain to drop on all further mysteries till the ensuing morning.

## CHAPTER LVII.

Before Adolphus had quitted his chamber the ensuing morning, he was surprised by the appearance of lord Villeroy, who, with a countenance pale and agitated, and with a manner almost abstracted and wild, apologized for his early intrusion.

“But did you know, dear Walsingham,” uttered he, “the tumult of my mind, you would easily compassionate my feelings on the present occasion. I beseech you to inform me by what means you came into possession of this handkerchief, marked with the name of Rosella Aubrey. Surely you could have no knowledge of such a personage, even when she was living, but now she is no longer in existence. Rosella Aubrey is no more!” and a deep and agonized sigh burst from the bosom of lord Villeroy, followed this remark.

Meanwhile Adolphus had collected all that he intended to say respecting the handkerchief, and replied to his lordship in the following words :

“Your lordship is perfectly right in supposing that I have no knowledge of such a being as Rosella Aubrey. The handkerchief I imagine to have been dropped in my uncle’s park, for there I found it; and by mere accident I presented it to Miss Mantle, who appears in ignorance as well as myself respecting the owner of it, since she disclaimed being the owner herself; and this, my lord, is all I know about the handkerchief which you or any other person may lay claim

to if they please, since it certainly does not belong to me."

With this account lord Villeroy appeared to be perfectly satisfied, and taking the handkerchief from his pocket, he began to examine it with the most scrutinizing attention, and after a considerable pause he exclaimed—

"It is singularly strange! it is profoundly mysterious! and I know not why I suspect there is some extraordinary deception at the bottom of it. The person who dropped this handkerchief, Walsingham, in Sir Mildred's park, dropped it by design, and not accident you may rely upon it. Would that I could discover the mysterious intruder; whether male or female they should repent of their temerity."

To which Adolphus replied—

"I grant that the name of Rosella Aubrey is not a hackneyed one; yet still there is a possibility of two or three persons being called by that name."

"Ah! but they could not mean my Rosella," exclaimed lord Villeroy. "She sleeps in the mouldering dust, the victim at once of her own fond credulity and my unworthiness towards her."

"I beheld the sweet maid in an humble vale, pure as the blossom of the peerless lily, and more transcendantly lovely than the summer rose. She was the pride of an aged father's heart, and repaid his love with all those endearing and gentle attentions, which in the evening of our days smooths the passage to an eternal life; and such was the affectionate Rosella to her aged and infirm parent. In a luckless hour I beheld the beauties of the lovely maiden, and like the serpent of old, insiduously crept into the peaceful cot-

tage which had so long given shelter to her innocence and youth. I devised means to get acquainted with the father of Rosella, in such disguises that he knew not of my rank and quality ; fortune but too well favoured my designs, and the good old man, pleased with my modest advances, invited me to partake of his humble board. I advanced higher to his friendship and his confidence, and I was often left in the society of his lovely daughter without suspicion and without fear. In those moments what did I not avail myself of, even while seated as a guest at the fireside of my too confiding host. I rifled him of all his heart held dear ! I robbed him of his child, and that child of the brightest jewel in a woman's possession—her honour. In fine I stole Rosella from the embraces of her aged father, and bore her secretly from her native village ; for awhile pleased with the novelty of her situation, and with a sacred promise I had given her to become her husband, she did not reflect on the rash and imprudent steps she had taken with her destroyer, and thought not of her father till it was too late. The poor old man had died of a broken heart as soon as he had discovered the flight of Rosella ; and when the news reached her ear, she grew almost frantic. I attempted to console her under an assurance of our immediate union taking place ; and as I really passionately loved her, sought every means in my power to reconcile her to her fate. At length I persuaded her to accompany me to Italy, where I proposed to marry her ; and hired a beautiful cottage on my arrival for her reception. But I had so immersed into the vices and follies of a life of pleasure, that I too frequently left her a prey to her own melancholy reflections.



In short, I sometimes wholly neglected my beautiful recluse, having formed an acquaintance with some females of licentious habits, whose wit, vivacity, and sprightliness of conversation, at this period, amused me infinitely more than the grave and pensive manners of my poor Rosella: she having heard of my gallantries, reproached me for my inconstancy towards her in a manner, which, though it stung me to the heart, neither my pride or passion well could brook, and I quitted her in disdain and silence.

“Alas! little did I then imagine, that it would be the last time I should ever behold the victim of my cruelty again! I returned to the cottage the ensuing morning, but saw not Rosella! I inquired of her attendant, but could only learn, that her mistress had gone out a few hours after I had left the cottage the preceding evening and had never returned.”

“‘And left no message! uttered I, almost panic-struck at the intelligence.’”

“‘None but this, my lord,’ replied the servant, holding out to me at the same moment a note, which I hastily tore open, and found it contained only the following short, but impressive words:—

“‘I am gone for ever! The victim of your cruelty, deception, and base ingratitude will never again intrude herself on your notice, or disturb you in your profane haunts of licentiousness.

“‘Villeroy, fare well! Rosella is fled to the grave of that aged father from whom you stole her: she will sleep in peace! When Villeroy shall seek Rosella she shall not be found!’”

“Imagine, my dear Walsingham,” continued lord Villeroy, “the excess of my surprise, my astonishment, my grief, and my despair at receiving these lines from my poor Rosella, conscious that I had wrung from her heart these short, distracted, and incoherent sentences by the impropriety of my conduct, and my unkind negligence towards her. I searched to recover my lost treasure, but fruitless were my inquiries. What had been her resources to enable her to take her flight I could not discover by any means whatever; for she had left behind her the whole of the elegant ornaments with which, in the moments of my fond regard, I had presented her; nor had she even taken any article of apparel along with her: all remained in her apartment. Unable to gain the least intelligence of her flight, or the manner, in which she effected it, I instantly resolved to quit Italy, and the seductive and dangerous society which had deprived me of the possession of the only woman I had ever truly loved: the loss of whom now preyed on my heart, and loaded me with compunction and remorse. At other intervals, I rushed into the bosom of dissipation: but the wounding thorn of reflection followed me there also! The image of Rosella fresh in unsullied beauty, such as I first beheld her in the humble cottage of her aged sire, haunted me perpetually, and strengthened me further in the resolution I had formed of immediately repairing to England to seek Rosella even where she had directed me, at the grave of her father. In one word, I did not doubt but the lost infatuated girl had wandered (though I knew not by what means, to her native village; and there I determined to go with the utmost expedition. Having made these arrangements

in my own mind, I became more tranquillized: pre-determined, that if I could again recover Rosella, to repair all the injuries I had done to the unhappy girl, by immediately making her my wife."

Lord Villeroy, from excessive emotion, now paused and sighed heavily; while Adolphus, most heartily commiserating his feelings, exclaimed,—

"And such a resolution my lord is worthy of an honorable man; and the only reparation which he can offer to the female he has betrayed: it is the only atonement he can make to soften the wounds he has inflicted on her heart; while he gives repentance to his own."

"And so I would have done Walsingham," cried lord Villeroy, "had chance blessed me with the sight of Rosella again! I have already informed you that I intended to depart from Italy, and I had arranged every thing for my embarkation on board of an English vessel, when, owing to the following singular and extraordinary incident, I once more redoubled my search to find my lost Rosella. It was the last night that I had yet to remain in Italy, and I unconsciously stole that night towards a chapel there, styled the chapel of the saints of Holy Mary; at which place my Rosella frequently attended. There was no mass performed on that evening, yet still I entered the holy sanctuary, dear to me from the recollection of my Rosella. There was no light but what was reflected from the pale moon-beam which gleamed faintly along the vaulted roofs. A solemn and an awful stillness reigned throughout; and no vestige of a human being near to disturb the profound and melancholy reveries into which I had fallen: I exclaimed, aloud, "Oh! Rosella! dear

lost Rosella ! now do I indeed meet punishment due to an apostate heart once offered to thee in vows of everlasting love : but here, here in this holy sanctuary I swear'—— Walsingham, I was on the point of prostrating myself at the foot of the sacred altar, before which so many had breathed their vows, when a melodious strain stole softly on my ear and swelled through the vaulted roofs of the chapel of Holy Saints. I started from my recumbent posture : I listened with profound attention : when a female voice (but certainly it was not that of Rosella) sung the following words : and I became suddenly transfixed with mysterious awe and amazement :—

' Cease prophaner ! cease thy prayer !

' In this hallowed place of rest :

' Can'st thou hope to still despair,

' By these tumults of thy breast !

' Kneel not to that hallowed shrine ;

' Nor to that holy altar bend,

' Till thou hast made Rosella thine,

' Angels will not be thy friend !

' Offer then thy homage here !

' Saints will hear it from above !

' When repentance is sincere,

' Doubt not mercy ! doubt not love !'

The voice ceased, but its melody vibrated on my ear ; and its impression never afterwards faded on my recollection ! In vain did I attempt to discover the mysterious enchantress : I attentively surveyed every part of the chapel, as far at least as the moon admitted her glimmering light, but I could perceive no

traces of a human being within its sacred walls. I inquired without, but no one had seen a human being enter. Heavenly powers! thought I, 'can this be superstition! No, it was not imaginary: it was a human being that I listened to with such profound attention; and its prophetic warning I dare not disobey! I hurried to my hotel in a perturbation that may easily be conceived from the instantaneous effect which this incident had produced on my feelings, and the following day renewed my search after Rosella,' but in vain. Without further delay I embarked for England; where, at the very first interview I had with my mother, I found that she had seen Rosella! Almighty Powers! uttered I, and how came she hither!"

" 'That,' cried lady Villeroy, "is a circumstance she did not choose to inform me of; nor can I easily forget the impression which she made on me when she threw herself at my feet, and confessed an acknowledgment of her error; and when with uplifted hands and streaming eyes she implored my protection, I, after some hesitation exclaimed, unhappy girl, what is your name, and who was your seducer? Judge of the surprise which your mother then experienced Charles when she falteringly replied,—

" 'My name is Aubrey: and he who betrayed me was, lord Villeroy!'"

At this discovery of my indiscretion Walsingham, the unfeeling lady Villeroy turned an un pitying ear to the sufferings of my poor Rosella; and indignantly reproaching her, bade her instantly begone from her presence, and seek an asylum where she would be more welcome. Lady Villeroy was obeyed; and I was almost frantic to learn, that after this interview, she had never beheld Rosella more.

It is impossible to say with what reproaches I assailed my mother at her inhuman conduct towards the poor unfortunate; and without waiting for further discussion on a subject which every moment filled me with the most insupportable anguish, I set out post haste for the village of Hampden. On my arrival, I disguised myself so that no one could have known me from my former appearance in that sequestered spot, and flew with impatience towards the once happy cottage of poor old Aubrey; which I found to be in the possession of a new inhabitant. With emotions that almost overpowered me, I ventured to inquire of the old woman, with an air of as much indifference as I could assume, if she knew what had become of the daughter of Mr. Aubrey. To which she replied in the following words: 'Why truly sir I cannot say I know much about the family, for I am not a native of this village; but my son has lately rented this cottage, and I am come to look after it. All I know is, that I am pretty certain there was a young woman buried out of this parish about a month ago and that her name was Aubrey, because I read it on the coffin when they were putting it into the ground: but it was quite a poor body, I assure you sir, just like myself; and as plain a coffin as ever you'd wish to see: not so much as a bit of black.' The old woman might have talked on till doomsday without meeting with any interruption; for at the very first part of her intelligence, I had become almost motionless and struck dumb with horror; and remained looking stedfastly at her, without the power of being able to articulate a single sentence. All that I can remember when I recovered from my state of stupifaction was the old

woman standing by me with a glass of water in her hand, and a younger one holding some vinegar to my nose. I had been placed in an arm chair, and, as they afterwards informed me, had sunk completely into insensibility: nor did I perfectly recover, till a shower of tears relieved my full heart. ‘But now I am truly glad to see you better sir,’ cried the old woman, ‘to be sure I did not suppose you would have taken on so sadly, or I would not have said a word about’—— I intreated the old woman not to repeat a sentence more on so distressing a subject; adding, that I was a distant relative of the deceased, and had not been informed of the afflicting news till the present moment; that it had a little overcome my feelings, by the sudden surprise into which it had thrown me; and thanking her for her humane attention towards me, I threw into her lap a purse full of silver, and precipitately rushed out of the cottage; not chusing to make any further inquiries in the village of Hampden before I departed: I had heard sufficient to unman every feeling of my inmost soul. My Rosella was indeed lost for ever! and according to her prophetic words, I had sought her, but she was only to be found in the grave of her father, with whose ashes she now reposed.

“Unable to contend with the agonizing reflection, that I had destroyed this lovely flower ere its blossom was half blown, I arrived in town in a state of delirium; and for three weeks my recovery was doubtful, as I raved continually for Rosella, and acknowledged myself the author of her sufferings and death. At length time softened my despair, and threw a veil over the sad history of my poor Rosella, and in compliance with the wishes of lady Villeroy I once more became an inha-

bitant of the gay world, and again a votary of its fascinating allurements. If I thought of Rosella, it was only for a fleeting moment. I thought I imagined that my heart was capable of forming a second attachment equally fervent as the first; and that when my mother introduced me to lady Mountsorrel, I had discovered in the charms of the beautiful Elinor a mind as replete with elegance, a heart as full of tender sympathy, and a temper mild and engaging as that of Rosella Aubrey. I need not tell you Walsingham, that this supposition is erroneous; it was mere illusion; Elinor has none of the qualities of that enchanting maid; and I will never marry lady Mountsorrel, Walsingham, you may rely upon it. Judge then what were my emotions on beholding this handkerchief last night in the hands of my sister marked with the name of Rosella Aubrey; it is most mysterious!"

"And yet I will venture to pronounce," uttered Adolphus, "that you will find, after what you have related to me, this said handkerchief to have a connexion, in some way or other, with the mysterious songstress in the chapel of All Saints, though who she is, I cannot divine."

Lord Villeroy and Adolphus immediately proceeded down stairs to breakfast, where the usual party, with the exception of Sir Mildred, were assembled, Miss Villeroy, Miss Mantle, and Mr. Markland, who was employed in pulling a very pretty posey to pieces, which, as he leaned over the back of Rebecca's chair, he had actually strewed the carpet with, and at the entrance of Adolphus and lord Villeroy he gaily chanted, —



“ ‘ Since life is no more than a passage at best,  
‘ Let us strew the way over with flowers.’

At which Angelina exclaimed laughing,—

“ And I wish Mr. Markland you had found any thing but my flowers to strew over the carpet. Look Miss Mantle, he has destroyed the beautiful nosegay that I brought over with me from lady Theodora’s !”

“ From lady Theodora’s, Angelina !” cried lord Villeroy ; while Adolphus looked equally surprised ; and Rebecca Mantle exhibited signs of the utmost embarrassment, scarce knowing what she did, as she attempted to pour out some coffee.

“ Yes brother, Miss Mantle and I have been over to lady Theodora’s because she wanted to speak with her, and so I accompanied her also, because I wanted to see the beautiful little foundling. Pretty creature ! how prodigiously she is grown. Do you know that she can repeat her name so plain, and so prettily ! What a lovely soul it is ! I don’t in the least wonder at lady Theodora being so fond of it.”

“ Nor I either I am sure,” cried Mr. Markland, “ it would be a very unfeminine like quality, not to love a beautiful little innocent when it is fostered on our protection ; and yet this is a quality which I have heard some ladies strongly protest against in the character of lady Theodora Percy. Lady Mountsorrel, for instance, professes an almost invincible dislike to children of every description.”

To which Angelina very artlessly replied,—

“ O yes, I remember she could not bear to endure the sight of little Frances when lady Theodora once brought her over to Avondale : but lady Mountsorrel

is so ill-natured, she likes nobody but mamma and Miss Mantle."

"And she will not like either of them long," uttered lord Villeroy, fixing his eyes with peculiar earnestness on the changing countenance of Rebecca while he added, "what think you Rebecca, you have lived long enough in the service of lady Mountsorrel to discover the caprice of her ladyship's disposition?"

To which Miss Mantle very gravely replied, half averting her countenance from his penetrating glance—

"It has been my misfortune, my lord, to have lived too long, to discover the caprice of friendship."

"And the inconstancy of love, did you mean to say too Rebecca," retorted lord Villeroy.

Miss Mantle, with a quick involuntary sigh, and a blush deeper tinted than the beautiful rose which Mr. Markland had just demolished, replied in a low faltering voice—

"I have lived too long to prove both, my lord."

Lord Villeroy looked confused and surprised; he had never heard Miss Mantle say so much; while at the same time Markland repeated, in his usual strain—

"And what is friendship but a name?

"A charm that lulls to sleep,

"A shade that follows wealth and fame;

"And leaves the wretch to weep!"

When Miss Mantle, with an enchanting variety of expression in her manner, totally different to what she had ever evinced before, exclaimed in the words of the same poet—

“ And love is still an emptier sound,  
“ The modern fair one’s jest,  
“ On earth unseen, or only found,  
“ To warm the turtle’s nest.”

“ Bravo ! my little Miss Mantle !” cried Markland.  
“ There, my lord, try and parry that if you can.”

Lord Villeroy had never removed his eyes from Miss Mantle, and when she closed the couplet he started from his chair, and walking to the window, exclaimed—

“ It is fancy ! it is illusion !” and then returning to the table, he apologized for having quitted it.

“ Well, and upon my honour and credit, my lord, I deem your lordship’s apology highly necessary,” cried Markland, “ both to me and Sambo, for you have turned over a cup of tea in your haste to get to the window, partly over my blue pantaloons, and the remainder into Sambo’s ears.”

Which was actually the case, and Sambo, highly offended with the affront he had received, sneaked to his master, and remained quietly under his chair, till the breakfast things were finally removed.

“ Sir Mildred Austincourt dines with us to-day for the first time since his dangerous indisposition,” uttered lord Villeroy. “ How I rejoice at his recovery, worthy excellent man. I should have been sorry to have returned to Avondale, without the pleasure of being one day in his society.”

“ One day, my lord,” exclaimed Adolphus. “ I hope your lordship has no intention of shortening your visit at the Priory.”

“ No indeed, my dear Walsingham, it has been considerably prolonged,” returned lord Villeroy, “ but

there may be circumstances which would have the effect of rendering some society at the Priory, were I to continue, much longer one of Sir Mildred's guests, somewhat less pleasurable than I expected. Pardon me (for the blood of Adolphus had mounted his fine expressive countenance, you cannot for a moment suspect that I mean any part of Sir Mildred's family. I allude to lady Mountsorrel; her ladyship you know is offended with me, and as I certainly do not mean to apologize to her ladyship for any offence that I have committed, of course we shall not be the most desirable companions to each other."

"She is a woman that it is utterly impossible to be in good humour with for four and twenty hours together," cried Mr. Markland, turning to Rebecca. "I am only surprised, Miss Mantle, how you can so patiently endure her ladyship's intolerable insolence. I have seen her insult you a number of times, and I confess I have actually been astonished at your continual forbearance."

To which Miss Mantle, after a moment's hesitation, replied—

"Sir—

"Sweet are the uses of adversity, which,

"Like the toad, venomous and ugly,

"Wears yet a precious jewel in its head."

"Lady Mountsorrel is my benefactress, Mr. Markland, and I have been patient, because from her ladyship's hand alone I receive my support. I had a home once—I once had a parent's home to receive me in—I once had a friend too? but he——deserted me!"

"Then by Heaven he was unworthy of the name

of man!" cried Mr. Markland, instantly changing his gay tone into accents of the most compassionate kindness.

Meanwhile the eyes of lord Villeroy were fixed on the expressive countenance of Rebecca Mantle with astonishment and surprise. The pathetic tone of her voice, when she altered the last sentence, seemed to have awakened in his mind the most painful recollection; and he was probably thinking of Rosella Aubrey all the time he was intent on a close examination of her features, which induced him suddenly to exclaim—

"Pardon me, Miss Mantle, for an impertinent enquiry, but had you ever a near relative of the name of Aubrey?"

To which Miss Mantle, in tremulous accents, replied—

"Yes, my lord, a very near one—he was my father!"

"Impossible, madam," cried lord Villeroy, springing from his seat, and pacing the room in the most violent disorder.

"To my knowledge, and agonizing now is the recollection, Mr. Aubrey had but one daughter, and she——"

"Is now in the presence of lord Villeroy," exclaimed the disguised and trembling Rebecca, who, with a slight movement of her hand, removed part of her head dress. The red locks which had before nearly concealed the whole of her forehead and part of her features, instantaneously dropped off, with the large muslin bordered cap which she constantly wore, and disclosed to the view of the astonished party which

surrounded her, a head and countenance of the most perfect Grecian mould, surpassing in loveliness any they had yet beheld either of ancient or modern times.

“Rosella Aubrey!” exclaimed lord Villeroy. “My own Rosella!” and she instantly fainted in his now protecting arms.

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## CHAPTER LVIII.

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The extatic joy of lord Villeroy—the tender, yet delicate, sensibility of the no longer disguised Miss Aubrey—the surprised Angelina—and the astonished Mr. Markland, all together produced a combination of feelings in the breast of each party hard to be described. On the mind of Adolphus it occasioned neither, having long known, from the hints given him by lady Theodora Percy, that there was mystery attached to the situation of Rebecca Mantle, and that she was not what she appeared to be in the service of lady Mountsorrel; which her late conduct respecting the handkerchief, and the sensations which she afterwards discovered in the presence of lord Villeroy, the more strongly confirmed. Still, however, there were mysteries which she herself could only explain, not doubting but she had disguised her voice in the chapel of the Holy Saints as effectually as she had contrived to veil the beauties of her person so long from the admiring eye. The hump on the back had also disappeared with the red locks, and was no longer perceptible in a

form which nature had spared no pains to render a model of perfection.

Miss Aubrey however did not remain many minutes in a state of insensibility ; she soon recovered sufficient composure to apologize for the confusion and trouble she had occasioned, and immediately to disengage herself from the encircling arms of lord Villeroy, whom she addressed in the following manner :—

“ Permit me, my lord, to justify myself in the presence of the present company, from appearances which may condemn me. But as I was about to quit the service of lady Mountsorrel, from some altercation which I yesterday had with her ladyship, and return to that fostering roof which has ever given me protection, I did not deem concealment of my former appearance any longer necessary; but before I quitted the service of lady Mountsorrel, I wished to apprise lord Villeroy of the real situation of Rebecca Mantle, and to explain some mysteries with which he was totally unacquainted before he left Italy, respecting the sudden flight of Rosella Aubrey from his lordship’s protection, as well as the incident which so unexpectedly alarmed and surprised him on the evening he paid a visit to the chapel of the Holy Saints.”

“ But one word, Rosella,” exclaimed lord Villeroy, before you proceed to particulars ; but one word to satisfy my resistless curiosity. Whose was that voice which uttered the prophetic warning? the recollection of which now sinks into my soul, and penetrates my heart.”

To which Miss Aubrey, immediately replied, to the astonishment of all present,—

“ The voice you heard was lady Theodora Percy’s !”

“ Lady Theodora Percy’s !” exclaimed lord Ville-roy in amazement.

“ The voice of Theodora !” repeated Adolphus, now glancing a look of the most anxious enquiry towards Miss Aubrey, who proceeded as follows :—

“ Yes, my lord, it was lady Theodora Percy, who had accompanied me that evening to the chapel of the Holy Mary, she having understood that mass was to be performed for the repose of one of the nuns at the Convent of St. Julian, whose funeral obsequies had taken place but a few days since in that hallowed sanctuary. It was she indeed, that angel of compassion, it was my protectress ! who, as we were about to leave the chapel in darkness and concealment, by one sudden ray of the moon, which reflected on the glittering star of the order that you wore, discovered a human being approaching to the holy shrine. Instantaneously I caught a glance of your features. ‘ ’Tis Villeroy !’ whispered I to my benefactress. At that moment you pronounced the name of your lost Rosella ; when you were on the eve of kneeling at the foot of the sacred altar, lady Theodora began that melodious strain in words which so powerfully alarmed and surprised you ; believing that it would impress on your mind the image of your lost Rosella more than any other existing circumstance ; after which we suddenly departed by a private passage, known only to the professors residing at St. Julian, to one of whom my protectress was a visitor and friend, and gained the grand portico without any interruption, and of course without being discovered by the holy fathers.”

“ Of whom I made enquiries, which were fruitless



and unavailing," uttered Villeroy; "and now, my adored Rosella, inform us by what accident you became acquainted with lady Theodora Percy?"

Miss Aubrey, blushing deeply at the passionate manner in which lord Villeroy now addressed her, immediately proceeded with her narration.

"I had been accustomed my lord constantly to attend every morning and evening that vespers or matins was performed in the chapel of the Holy Mary; and on the evening you quitted me, I repaired to my favorite place of devotion. The service was solemn and affecting. I thought of my aged sire, whose remains now slumbered in the mouldering dust: I thought of the village of Hampden; and of my once peaceful and happy home: and, Oh! forgive me Villeroy, I reflected with the most bitter anguish on your broken and apostate vows. My heart was brimful, and my eyes overflowed: I sobbed aloud. The eyes of the spectators were directed towards me; some with curiosity, and others with sympathy and compassion; but none were led to inquire into the cause of my sufferings or my grief. But one fair lovely youthful creature, who like a bright star, shone transcendently above all the rest: she had a female companion with her habited in black; but whose features, or countenance, I could not discern, being deeply veiled. The attire of my benefactress bespoke her of superior rank and quality. I perceived that my strong and powerful emotions had awakened her compassionate attention and excited her tenderest pity; and when the vespers were concluded, she desired me to follow her in a gentle whisper; her companion retiring to a most respectful distance during the moments that we conversed together. I gave her

a brief outline of the nature of my misfortunes; informing her that I had neither home nor parent left; that my indiscretion had robbed me of both; but that I had resolved never more to enter the roof of my betrayer.

“ ‘ In which resolve,’ answered she in the sweetest accents imaginable, ‘ I think you are right; for had lord Villeroy loved you, he would have acted differently. Therefore, trust him not: he would not have neglected you if ever he had intended to have made you his wife. In a few days I depart from Italy, and if you really wish to avoid the disgraceful situation in which you are now placed, if you wish to fly the man who has betrayed you, I offer you my protection: you shall accompany me to England: and when arrived there, I will not desert you, nor ever shall you want an asylum under the roof of Theodora Percy.’

“ I threw myself at her feet: I bathed the hand of this kind angel with my tears; and from the chapel of the Holy Mary accompanied my young protectress home. It was an elegant chateau on the borders of the lake; and where I had no sooner arrived than I was treated with every mark of kindness, from not only the domestics of my beautiful protectress, but by her particular friends the count and countess Molini and—— and—— (At this part of her narration Miss Aubrey, casting her eyes on the now greatly agitated and surprised countenance of Adolphus, paused with painful embarrassment, at length added in a tone marked with peculiar circumspection) and signior Antonia the young nephew of the amiable countess Molini; he too was excessively polite and friendly in his attentions towards me during the whole of our voyage to England; previous to which, and before I

finally bade adieu to Italy, my protectress cautioned me to disguise my person as singular as possible.

“ ‘ You must study concealment my dear Rosella,’ uttered she, ‘ to avoid any description of your person given by lord Villeroy, who may think it necessary to pursue you ; and even under my protection you would not then be safe. What think you of a red wig with a hump on your back : his lordship would not easily discover his beautiful sultana in such a disguise.’ ”

“ The plan, as you may easily imagine my lord, was immediately adopted ; and lady Theodora, having christened me by the name of Rebecca Mantle, there was no longer any appearance of such a personage as Rosella Aubrey. I disguised my voice too as much as possible from its former tone.”

“ No, Rosella, that you could not do,” interrupted lord Villeroy, “ for often has the very sound of that voice, though uttered only in the softest whispers, rivetted my attention, and awakened the most powerful emotions in my heart.”

“ So it has brother,” cried the artless Angelina, “ I have seen you turn so pale when Miss Aubrey has been speaking to mamma or lady Mountsorrel, that I have often wondered what could make you so grave and spiritless afterwards.”

“ You interrupt Miss Aubrey my dear Miss Villeroy,” cried Mr. Markland, “ pray go on madam, if it is not impertinent in me to request it, for upon my honor and credit, I am extremely solicitous to learn, how, after having lived with such an angelic being as lady Theodora Percy, you could repose beneath the roof of such a fury as lady Mountsorrel ; whom I never yet encountered without it reminding me of the scaman’s ditty,—

“ When the stormy winds do blow:

“ When stormy winds do blow.”

As this was actually sung as well as repeated by Mr. Markland, it occasioned a momentary laugh, and silence being restored, Miss Aubrey again proceeded.

“ I assure you Mr. Markland that I was neither driven from the abode of my lovely protectress, nor prompted by inclination to enlist under the banners of lady Mountsorrel; but I had a strong and powerful inducement to learn the true state of lord Villeroy’s affections for that so greatly talked of and fashionable beauty, and whether that heart yet retained one spark of feeling for the memory of Rosella Aubrey; and I could not do this so easily as by becoming the constant companion of lady Mountsorrel, and residing under the same roof with her. Her ladyship’s whimsical and extraordinary advertisement for a female companion one morning met my eye, and I determined instantly of availing myself of the opportunity both of seeing and conversing with lord Villeroy under the assumed character of Rebecca Mantle; when I soon had the inexpressible mortification to find that his lordship had no interest in such a heart as lady Mountsorrel’s; and that he was likely to become her slave and not her lover, from the extreme caprice of her ladyship’s whimsical disposition. The thought pained and distracted me, and I was often obliged to retire to conceal the anguish which this reflection produced upon my feelings, having no plan to adopt but silence, and no remedy but patience. At length my situation with lady Mountsorrel became insupportable; as being at the Priory, I beheld lord Villeroy every day, every hour, without his being able to discover the character

I had with so much pain and difficulty personated. An incident occurred however which soon determined me to throw off my disguise. It was lord Villeroy, the handkerchief which by mere chance dropt out of my pocket one evening as I was walking in Sir Mildred's park, and which Mr. Walsingham soon afterwards found and would have restored to me again on the night that lady Mountsorrel was so suddenly seized with indisposition. The emotions which you discovered my lord at the sight of that well-remembered name Rosella Aubrey awakened in my heart a most powerful sense of gratitude, and determined me no longer to conceal her from your knowledge: she is now here before you to bid you farewell, and most sincerely to thank you for the deep regret you have experienced on her account. My kind and lovely benefactress again receives me in her house: she again offers an asylum to Rosella Aubrey with the same kind humanity as she before gave a protecting shelter to Rebecca Mantle."

Miss Aubrey arose to depart, but she was soon prevented from leaving the room by lord Villeroy, who gently leading her back to her chair, exclaimed aloud,

"No, Rosella, by heaven! you do not quit this roof till you are under my protection, nor till I lead you to your benefactress under a different name and title than those which you have hitherto appeared in, and that will be your most proper title; to which, I feel at this moment, you, and you only, have the most proper claim: it will be in the character of lady Villeroy, Rosella, that you will again behold your benefactress."

Astonishment sealed the lips of Miss Aubrey: applause, the most rapturous applause, burst from those

of Mr. Markland : tears filled the eyes of the lovely Angelina ; and the warm and cheering congratulations which were bestowed on his lordship by Adolphus, almost overpowered him, as seizing the hand of the trembling and abashed Rosella, he exclaimed—

“ What, think you that I could again be villain enough to desert you ? think you that I would again part with you ? This heart, that has already bled at every pore when I followed you to England and found you not ! when I fled on the wings of impatience to your native village, and heard that my Rosella was no more ! ”

“ Good Heavens ! my lord, from whom did you receive this intelligence ? ” exclaimed Miss Aubrey.

“ From an old woman who has lately taken possession of your father’s cottage,” replied lord Villeroy. It was she who informed me that a young woman of the name of Aubrey was deceased ; she even described the funeral, and Oh, Rosella ! what horror, what anguish then was mine.

“ The mistake is easily accounted for,” cried Miss Aubrey. “ There was a young woman who lived as servant with the Clergyman of our Parish, whose name was certainly Aubrey, but her christian name was Mary.”

“ Heaven be praised it was not Rosella Aubrey ! ” cried Mr. Markland, “ and so with your leave we will drop the sombre subject into the grave with poor Mary. The present moments are designed for joy and mirth, and as I happen to be one of mirth’s crew, I will not allow of any in my company to indulge in melancholy reflections, especially as I am now going to sing—

‘ Away with melancholy,

‘ No doleful changes ring.’

And uprose Mr. Markland from his chair, and capered about the room singing and dancing a variety of tunes to the amusement of his friends, but mostly to the entertainment of the smiling Angelina, who exclaimed—

“ Well, I protest Mr. Markland you are the drollest man in existence. I never saw you look grave but once, and that was when you was looking at”—

“ Lady Mountsorrel !” exclaimed Mr. Markland, as at that moment her ladyship flounced into the room.

But what was her surprise and astonishment at the appalling sight she there beheld ? A beautiful young female, at the back of whose chair lord Villeroy leaned in the attitude of the fondest love and admiration, with one of her delicate hands, which was even whiter than those of her ladyship’s, clasped in his, while her dark blue eyes rested with confidence on his fine expressive, and then love beaming features.

Let me, Hogarth, borrow but for a moment, one tip only of thy pencil, ‘one shade of thy colouring, to portray at this moment the countenance of lady Elinor Mountsorrel, as she screamed forth—

“ Will any body explain the nature of this business ? are you all dumb ? will nobody speak ? will nobody tell me what has become of Rebecca Mantle ?”

Mr. Markland now laughed so immoderately, that her ladyship’s passion arose almost to a pitch of fury ; while lord Villeroy, taking Miss Aubrey by the hand, led her up to lady Mountsorrel, and addressed her in the following words :—

“ Behold your former attendant, lady Mountsorrel, no longer Rebecca Mantle, but Miss Aubrey ; and the next character in which she will appear will be that of my wife. Has your ladyship any possible objection to such an arrangement being made in favour of your favourite, Rebecca ?”

To which Miss Aubrey, immediately advancing towards the astonished, indignant, and offended beauty, mildly added at the same instant that she extended her lovely hand—

“ Forgive me, lady Mountsorrel, for an innocent stratagem, which has given pain to no one but myself, and which would never have been imposed on you, had I not been perfectly conscious of your utter indifference to lord Villeroy. The claims I had on his lordship would never have been revealed by Rosella Aubrey, had the heart of lady Mountsorrel been in danger of being broken by the present discovery.”

The offered hand had been rejected with the greatest disdain by lady Mountsorrel, and the apology of Miss Aubrey had been received with an equal share of her ladyship’s contempt, whom, notwithstanding the presence of lord Villeroy, she loaded with the most violent invective and abuse.

“ And so,” cried she, darting a glance of the most malignant expression, “ you are the *chère amie* of his lordship’s extremely delicate and honourable attachment? you are the pretty Rosella in the character of lord Villeroy’s kept mistress, who had first the presumption to introduce yourself on the presence of lady Villeroy, where you confessed your amorous intercourse with her son ; and when she very justly discarded you from her doors, you had then the audacity to force



yourself on the notice, and gain the protection of lady Mountsorrel, under a mask of the most gross deception, in order to captivate your dying swain, and woo him to your arms again ! Upon my word, Miss Rosella Aubrey, you would make a most delightful and ingenious actress, had not your more fortunate destiny marked you out for a coronet. No doubt but you will grace it : there is not the least doubt but such uncommon beauty, with such chaste and virtuous propensities, will add to perfection so rare and to talents so unrivalled—of all which I congratulate my lord Villeroy, on the full and entire possession of so great and extraordinary an assemblage of native village charms !”

“ Give me a village rose beyond any thing in nature,” exclaimed Mr. Markland. “ But don’t be angry, my dear Miss Aubrey, for her ladyship has just been paying you one of the highest compliments she can confer ; and I will tell you what that is, and what her ladyship does not seem to know, that the most extraordinary merit is that which forces praise from envy.”

“ Envy indeed !” cried lady Mountsorrel, whose passion exceeded all manner of bounds, as she hastily retreated towards the door. “ When a kept mistress excites envy”—

“ From such a paragon of virtue as lady Mountsorrel, her situation must be envious indeed,” cried Mr. Markland. “ But let not lady Mountsorrel advance a step further in her scurrilous abuse against Miss Aubrey, or by the powers I will make your ladyship ashamed of shewing your face at the west end of the town for a winter to come. You are a pretty per-

sonage to come here preaching morality, my lady, at the same time that you are giving up every just and honourable claim to it by a clandestine correspondence with such an exalted personage as Mr. Varney, the discharged steward of lord Villeroy; discharged for the nefarious practice of robbing his lordship's tenants of their hard earned labour and the gains of their honourable industry. What say you to this, my lady? deny this assertion if you can, and I will give you leave to preach of morality as long as your ladyship can find time for such employment."

"And at the same time give me leave to suggest to lady Mountsorrel," cried lord Villeroy, now rising and advancing towards her, "that she must not a second time presume to insult Miss Aubrey with impunity."

"Or suppose that it will ever meet with any encouragement or toleration under the roof of Austin-court Priory," exclaimed Adolphus.

On these words lady Mountsorrel, casting a look of the most ineffable disdain on all parties, made an immediate and precipitate retreat, closing the door after her with a violence which but too clearly justified the nature of her malignant disposition; and in less than half an hour after they had the satisfaction of beholding her ladyship's travelling carriage at the door, into which she shortly ascended with her inseparable and dearly beloved friend, the partner of her joys, and the perfect model of her ladyship's amiable propensities, lady Villeroy, who, before she took her final leave of the Priory, left a short note for Sir Milledred, and another for her son, which was couched in the following terms:—

"You cannot expect, Charles, after what has passed

between you and the sweet creature whom you have so injuriously treated, that I shall stay to witness a further repetition of your disgraceful conduct, or condescend any longer to continue the guest of those personages, who have dared to encourage you by insulting lady Mountsorrel. I am therefore going to accompany my divine Elinor to her seat in Wales; where in retiring shades we shall sympathize together over our mutual sufferings: she will mourn over the inconsistency of a faithless lover; and I lament the follies of an ungrateful son.

“As to your sister, you have so completely indulged and spoiled her, that I have no longer any controul over her, and therefore leave her under your care; and the sooner you get the girl married the better. I am very indifferent about her choice: she may marry who she likes provided she does not bring poverty into the family.

“I am very angry with you Charles, so you cannot expect that I should say any thing very pleasant: but I am shocked to find that you have any intention of marrying Rosella Aubrey, when you might have had her under your protection on much easier terms. Heavens! what will the world say of such an alliance? how will you be able to shew your nose in fashionable society with a village girl hanging on your arm, who has nothing to recommend her but a pretty face? Are you not ashamed Charles of such perversion of taste, to wear at your breast a simple wild flower when you could have selected such a splendid and beautiful exotic rose as the charming Elinor. However, I shall cease to rail, as I know you will follow your own inclinations with respect to Rosella whether I like it

or not. I shall only add that, if your father had not evinced a more elegant and refined taste, you would not at this moment have been the earl of Villeroy, nor I

“Your excessively displeased

“and highly provoked mother,

“CELESTINA AUGUSTA VILLEROY.”

The only impression which this letter made on the mind of lord Villeroy was a regret that his mother had not made mention of Angelina in kinder terms; for his own sensations were not rendered very painful by any sentiments she had expressed on his account. It was precisely such a letter as he expected to receive from such a mother; and he buried his own reflections in silence as he again rejoined his friends, resolved that neither the feelings of Rosella, nor those of his sister, should be wounded by an exposure of the contents of lady Villeroy's unkind letter towards them: he was not proof however against the inquiry of the artless and affectionate girl on his entrance to the apartment, who exclaimed,—

“Is mamma really gone away brother?”

To which he replied,—

“Yes, Angelina, lady Villeroy is really gone with lady Mountsortel to visit her ladyship's seat in Wales, a distance of nearly three hundred miles; where, she informs me, she intends to remain a considerable time.”

“And did mamma leave no letter or message for poor Angelina,” further inquired the sweet girl in a tone peculiarly affecting, and it immediately found its way to a brother's heart: he approached her; drew a

chair close beside; and taking her hand with an air of the tenderest kindness, softly whispered,—

“ Though your mother is unmindful of her duty to so amiable a child, your brother, Angelina, will supply her place with all that affection and attention you deserve. You shall never want protection while Ville-roy lives: your brother’s home will be that of Angelina too; and you will ever be the object of his solicitude and anxiety !”

The lovely girl was neither proof against the unkindness of her mother, nor this unexpected flow of tender sympathy in her brother; they alike touched a heart composed of the most gentle materials: she burst into tears; and it was many minutes before the redoubled attention of lord Villeroy, or the kind assistance of Miss Aubrey could restore her spirits to their usual tone. At length they succeeded, and Angelina again began to smile and enjoy the good humour and mirthful pleasantries of Mr. Markland, who however in a low whisper, thus exclaimed to Adolphus:—

“ Here is a lovely girl just opening into the bloom of womanhood without a mother’s fostering care; and yet that mother in existence spending her hours in rural and retiring shades with a bosom friend, while her own daughter is only a secondary consideration; and this Mr. Walsingham is one of the habits of a fashionable system of Education: but accursed be such systems say I. Had I a wife, she should learn to nurse her own children if she brought me the dowry of a princess. I should expect that she would perform the first duty which nature has imposed upon a woman after she is become a mother and a wife; and she who abandons this is unworthy of being called either;

she may be a woman, but she will be divested of the most lovely ornament which can adorn her sex, or the sweetest charm that can give her value in the eyes of men, **MATERNAL AFFECTION.**"

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## CHAPTER LIX.

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A few hours were now left for the composure of all parties prior to their again assembling at dinner-time, when their venerable host was to make one of the number; to whom, lord Villeroy now felt it a duty incumbent upon him to pay his respects, and to apologize for the abrupt departure of his mother from his hospitable and benevolent mansion; and of clearly elucidating the mystery and confusion which the space only of a few hours had produced in the priory. In order to do which, he intreated Adolphus to accompany him to the dressing-room of his worthy uncle, where he immediately disclosed to Sir Mildred every transaction that had passed between him and Miss Aubrey; the kind part which lady Theodora Percy had taken in the misfortunes of Rosella; and concluded with ultimately declaring, that it was his intention of immediately leading Miss Aubrey to the temple of Hymen, provided that Sir Mildred would have no objection to the nuptials being solemnized under the roof of Austincourt Priory; which has been the scene of my repentance, my contrition, my returning love

for a treasure, which I deplored as irrecoverably lost to me for ever. Oh ! let it now be the auspicious omen of my felicity,—let me hail it under your benevolent roof Sir Mildred, as one of the most transporting moments of my whole existence ; acknowledging myself to be the husband of Rosella, I shall from that moment renounce all former follies, and bury all painful retrospections by the only way in which I can indeed atone for her wrongs, and make her forget those wounds I once inflicted on her gentle heart.”

To which Sir Mildred replied,—

“ And doubt not my lord but that it is at the same instant the most honorable way by which you can insure the approbation of your own conscience, and for ever command the good opinion of all just and honest men ; and most heartily do I congratulate you on the pleasing turn in the tide of your affairs, in regaining the woman whom your heart first elected, while you prudently resign the fancied claims of the second, with whom you never could have enjoyed that felicity which all men hope for but seldom find in the matrimonial life ; and for the loss of which, neither wit, beauty, or accomplishments however transcendent, can ever compensate. I, for my own part, married a fashionable beauty, and discovered too late my repentance and my folly. Would to heaven that this had been all I was destined to encounter in my marriage with Lady Austincourt ; but she perverted my children too : they followed the pernicious habits which she had early taught them to adopt ; all but one were the disciples of their mother out of the four of whom I was the father ; none but my Edmund have evinced towards me the affectionate duties of a child.”

A tear started unbidden in the eyes of Sir Mildred as he made this remark; and Adolphus eagerly snatching his uncle's hand to his lips, repeated with the most uncontrollable emotion,—

“And is not your Orphan Boy one of your children too! Would he not resign at this very moment every flattering hope, if by that sacrifice he could secure the far dearer happiness of his revered beloved uncle!”

The action of Adolphus was beautiful; his fine manly and ingenuous countenance beamed with the most animated grace and expression, and a tear glistened like the pearly gems of morn in his eloquent and speaking eye; while Sir Mildred, no less powerfully affected, returning his warm and affectionate embrace, exclaimed,—

“Yes, child of my adoption, orphan son of a beloved sister, you have invariably proved worthy of my tenderest affections, and may every blessing crown your dutiful and unexampled fidelity towards me; for I feel in my old age how necessary you have been in prolonging that existence, which had been wretched without your affectionate attentions. As to poor Edmund, he cannot come often to see me; the functions of his calling keep him actively employed.”

“But you will yet see him much sooner than you expected my dear uncle,” uttered Adolphus, “Edmund will be here to-morrow. I did not wish to alarm him unnecessarily while you continued so indisposed, but the moment of your recovery, I hastened to inform Edmund of the favorable issue, and he proposes visiting the Priory to-morrow.”

To which Sir Mildred smilingly replied,—



"I am amazingly glad to hear it my dear boy, for you see that his services will be in requisition before he is aware of it. What say you my lord, have you any objection to my son Edmund officiating on a certain happy occasion? We can soon procure a special licence; and we shall be at no loss for bride-maids, for there will be your lovely sister and Miss Montgomery, who I dare say will accompany Edmund to the Priory."

"Believe me, no:" cried lord Villeroy, "I am on the contrary delighted with your proposition; and shall heartily rejoice to receive the services of Mr. Edmund Austincourt on one of the most important events of my whole life."

But you say nothing of the fair bride-maids," cried Adolphus, with a look of the most anxious inquiry, and betraying a little embarrassment by no means unremarked by Sir Mildred; and lord Villeroy replied smilingly,—

"Of course I admit my sister, she cannot do less; besides, she was much attached to my Rosella when she only knew her in the character of Rebecca Mantle, to whom poor Angelina must now look up for those kind and soothing attentions which she has never experienced from her mother. But may I not be permitted to select another bride's-maid, as also having taken a deep interest in the welfare and happiness of Rosella Aubrey; or am I too presumptuous in cherishing a hope that lady Theodora Percy will grace with her presence the nuptials of her in prosperity, whom she did not deem unworthy of her friendship in the dark hour when adversity frowned upon her: in one

word, ought I to expect that lady Theodora Percy will be present on the marriage-day of her grateful Rosella?"

Adolphus was wholly silent; he did not dare trust himself on the subject of Theodora without betraying sensations, which he felt it utterly impossible to conquer while such a being as Antonia existed, and the birth of the Italian foundling remained yet a mystery; though, at the same time, he daily discovered new perfections in the object he adored. While these sensations were rapidly passing in the mind of the agitated and perplexed lover, lord Villeroy was lost in amazement at his silence; well knowing that lady Theodora was the object almost of idolatry with the too conscious and sensitive being before him. And he was just on the point of retiring from motives of the extremest delicacy, and without discussing the subject any further, believing that there was some misunderstanding between them, when, after a considerable pause, Sir Mildred exclaimed,—

"Yes my lord, we may expect any thing that is either kind and condescending in lady Theodora Percy; and were she not sometimes carried away by the overflow of her excellent spirits, which make her incautiously follow the bent of a little somewhat too highly romantic disposition, and listen with a too indulgent ear to the tales of others, she would be a paragon of womankind; as she is indisputably the loveliest creature in existence."

Lord Villeroy coloured high, in a supposition that Sir Mildred was alluding to Miss Aubrey; which being immediately perceived, Sir Mildred added,—

"My lord, heaven forbid that the kindness which

has been manifested by lady Theodora to Miss Aubrey should now be the cause of my reprehension : it is not Miss Aubrey that would ever have reflected a murmur of disapprobation on the conduct of lady Theodora Percy ; but there are other objects, on whom she has bestowed her condescension and kindness, and to whom she has given her confidence and friendship, not quite so properly selected as, to continue to be the bosom friends of so youthful, beautiful, and exalted a personage as lady Theodora ; and whom, notwithstanding the utmost caution and intreaties of her more experienced advisers, she persists in her fixed and unalterable attachment to. It is this feature in the character of Theodora that I would rigidly condemn ; and that I still condemn, without being able to alter her determination, or change her plans."

" Good heavens ! Sir Mildred, how you astonish and confound me," uttered lord Villeroy, " by this representation of lady Theodora, to whom, though certainly an almost entire stranger (as I conversed with her even without the knowledge of her name), yet I should not have hesitated in pronouncing her to be the most faultless being in creation."

" And so she is still in all but this particular," exclaimed Sir Mildred, " but the woman who bears about her mystery and concealment my lord must ever excite suspicions : in one word, the conduct of Theodora with respect to this one circumstance yet unrevealed to her dearest friends, though she had the eloquence of an angel to plead in extenuation of the fault, would inspire me with displeasure towards her. However let us dismiss the subject, it grows painful and distressing to all parties, and particularly so to my dear

nephew, who is possibly more interested than any of us in this mysterious affair."

Adolphus indeed looked pained and confounded, but he refused either to join in the praise or dispraise of lady Theodora; till at the departure of lord Ville-roy, he could unburthen his whole heart to his uncle, and then he confessed the state of his feelings with respect to the idol of his affections and concluded with assuring him, that he entertained not the slightest suspicion of the honor or strict intentions of the so greatly adored and lovely maid; and that he believed the rejection of his hand was merely owing to the impenetrable mystery in which she was involved, and which she had declared to him, death only could dissolve."

Sir Mildred looked aghast and confounded, while he exclaimed,—

"Death! it is mere evasion!—imprudent, rash, and mysterious girl! What death can she possibly be alluding to, unless indeed it is the death of that accursed Italian, to whom she has been giving an indiscriminate promise of marriage, or is already privately contracted to him for aught we know."

Instantly the complexion of Adolphus changed to a death-like hue and he almost gasped for breath, while he passionately exclaimed,—

"Oh! my dear uncle, if you value my existence, suggest not a thought so terrific, so soul-harrowing to my imagination!—Theodora privately contracted to Antonia!—Oh! forbid it every pitying power; for then would she be lost to me for ever, and your Adolphus miserable——distracted——alas! I know not what:—I should I feel, never, oh! never, survive the conflict."

Adolphus had already risen from his chair: he paced

the room in the most wild and passionate disorder: at length growing more calm he burst into an agony of tears, which greatly afflicted and astonished his uncle; who, shocked at his appearance, intreated him to be calm.

“My dear boy,” uttered Sir Mildred, “recover these wild tumults I beseech you; you distress me exceedingly; I never saw you so before.”

To which Adolphus replied with a deep and agonized sigh and endeavouring to recover his self-possession,—

“Oh! my dear uncle, but I have often been thus. This Antonia has been the torment of my existence ever since Edmund”——

Adolphus paused: he had incautiously mentioned the name of Edmund, and he could not recede; and he continued,—

“Ever since Edmund informed me of the change in Theodora’s disposition.”

“I thought as much,” cried Sir Mildred, “Edmund like me had his suspicions. I liked not those private conferences, those mysterious meetings: shut up for hours together in a nursery with an infant, the birth of whom is only known to these two individuals, Theodora and Antonia, a being, who, strange to say, bears neither decidedly an appearance of male or female. I never beheld so extraordinary a character. ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ was all I heard him utter during the whole time that he remained a visitor at Heath Cottage: but when he departed, I heard that his emotions had been powerful and uncontrolled, and that he sobbed and wept over the foundling with all a mother’s soft affection. I must own, that I fancied the tone of Antonia’s voice was feminine.”

“Feminine!” repeated Adolphus.

To which Sir Mildred almost instantly replied,—

“ Yes, but that the coarse turn of his features, and the swarthy colour of his complexion, which is excessively dark and forbidding, absolutely repelled the supposition. After his departure, and frequently before he quitted the residence of Theodora, have I questioned her on her peculiar intimacy with this Italian; but as her replies were neither consistent nor perfectly well-bred, I forbore making any further inquiries on a subject, on which we incessantly disagreed and which always produced an altercation, and even a coldness between us. Nor was Edmund treated more favorably: he once surprised her in the nursery with this Antonia; and I believe that Edmund did not then scruple to censure appearances every way so unbecoming in such a character as Theodora Percy; and they parted on no very cordial terms: indeed Edmund has never been at Heath Cottage since. As to the infant, once only have I beheld it, and then it was sleeping in her arms: she was in one of her sportive humours, ‘ Will you not imprint a kiss on the lips of this little innocent,’ uttered she, and held it towards me. Now you know Dolphy, that I am naturally fond of children, but for my life and soul, I could not caress this Italian foundling; it may be wrong, but I had imbibed an almost unconquerable dislike towards it, and somewhat more sternly than I intended, desired that she would never again presume to take so unwarrantable a liberty, as to intrude upon my notice her little Italian minion; when, to my utter astonishment, still confirming more strongly than ever my suspicions, she burst into an agony of tears, while she exclaimed,—

"Unkind Sir Mildred! on me bestow your invectives—let me be the object of your hatred, of your aversion, your contempt, but spare, Oh! spare this child: she is innocent whatever be the indiscretion of the parent who has deserted her! Oh! do not frown thus upon its smiling face; the sight of which methinks, should disarm all anger, and banish all reproach!"

"Speak, mysterious girl then," uttered I, "and all these suspicions would instantly vanish; and my heart be at rest respecting the origin of this infant! Tell me at once, are you acquainted with the authors of its being?"

To which she answered in a firm unshaken tone,—

"Yes:—and one of them is dear to my heart, dear as this sleeping innocent: the other (and a deadly paleness overspread the countenance of Theodora, and she trembled and faltered while she uttered these words) the other, I despise!"

"She then rang the bell, and the infant was consigned to the care of its nurse.

"'Is this all that you intend to reveal Theodora,' cried I.

"'It is all that I dare to reveal Sir Mildred!' exclaimed she, 'even though my own father were here standing by me imploring me to confession, I could reveal nothing more respecting this child, save alone, that I never will desert it, never will neglect, never will abandon it to the mercy of another. Frances is mine by adoption, mine by protection, and mine by a most sacred oath, which is now registered in heaven: and by that heaven, I now swear, I never will resign her but to those dear arms from whence I received her. This is all Sir Mildred you will at present learn of the mysterious little foundling.'

“What think you of this Dolphy? do you imagine that after this conversation I ever more repeated my inquiries? No: I would disdain to solicit a confidence I was thought unworthy of. All that I suspect is, that the father of this child is no less than this very mysterious and dangerous character, this young Antonia; and the mother”——

“For heaven’s sake my dear uncle, whom then do you suspect the mother to be?” cried Adolphus, with a countenance which too plainly evinced the disorder of his mind.

To which Sir Mildred replied,—

“There Theodora has left us in utter darkness and impenetrable mystery. You might as well attempt to explore the Cretan labyrinth as to find out that she probably does not exist; or if existing, Theodora is ashamed of owning that she has any connexion with her; and that is the only probable conclusion I can make of the business. And now my dear boy, let us immediately dismiss this painful subject, in which your feelings have sustained an extraordinary trial. At all events wait with patience the issue of that unerring Providence, which will in due time reveal all that it is necessary for us to know: and, if never revealed, it is much better for us not to know. And this is the only remedy you can adopt on the present occasion. In the mean time, be on good terms if you can with that little Circe, Theodora: and as to the bantling, let her do what she likes with it: she may one day relent and tell us all about it: she is rich enough you know to provide for that and half a dozen more if they should be palmed upon her! for with all her little foibles, she is still the most generous-hearted girl in



existence. What do you think were the contents of the packet which she left the other morning in my hands. Judge then my surprise on perusing the following words :—

‘ Dear Sir Mildred,

‘ Use the inclosed at your discretion and you will infinitely oblige me. I am sorry to hear of Frederic’s misfortune, because he has occasioned you some involvements by his excessive folly. At all events, make me your banker on this occasion.

‘ And believe me,

‘ Your’s truly,

‘ THEODORA PERCY.’

In this note was a draft for a thousand pounds Dolphy; and I have actually sent it to Fred, because I know that Theodora intended it for him though she did not like to say so. This will relieve him it is to be hoped till he can make some arrangement in his affairs.”

Adolphus, at this fresh proof of the exalted nobleness and goodness in the disposition of Theodora which raised her to a standard of perfection beyond which it was almost impossible to go, felt sensations hard to be defined, as they kept continually changing from one extreme to the other, and staggered all belief of her infidelity with Antonia; in the next moment however they were less favorable, and he beheld her conduct in a double light, reflecting a mirror only of deceptive arts; and he exclaimed in the presence of his uncle, who perceived the conflicts which were passing in his agitated mind,—

Oh! Theodora, lovely and beloved Theodora! why have you perverted such angelic virtues? Why, why

was I not permitted to bend to that shrine without a knowledge of thy indiscretion, which I would so fondly, so willingly disbelieve, but for appearances so mysterious, so doubtful" —

"But which have never yet been confirmed," cried Sir Mildred, "therefore, our doubts are traitors, that make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt."

"But surely my dear uncle there is no necessity of making lady Theodora your banker when my purse is ever open for your service. There is yet the property of the excellent Camilla Grandison remaining untouched; except that I have reserved the seat in Wales for a particular purpose, in which I should not like to alter my intentions."

"And of which you have an undoubted right to dispose in what manner you think proper," returned Sir Mildred, "it is considerable to those who are rich enough to purchase it, and will possess superior advantages without having the slightest incumbrance whatsoever."

"I rejoice to hear it my dear uncle," cried Adolphus, "although these considerations are of no moment to me, as it will never have a purchaser: in fact, I am going to give it away."

Sir Mildred looked astonished and confounded; and he exclaimed,—

"Give the estate in Wales away that was once Camilla Grandison's! No, Dolph, you will not do any such thing, I think I know you better!"

Adolphus smiled, while he answered,—

"I think my dear uncle you ought to know me better than to imagine that I should ever consent to enjoy the whole of Miss Grandison's property without

bestowing some part of it on those who would have been her heirs had not her high sense of the little services I once rendered her induced her to alter the balance in my favor. You well know that Edmund would have been the heir to all the property of which she died possessed; and think you I would ever behold him destitute while by such means I had become enriched? No, uncle: perish so mercenary a thought. If fortune is blindfolded when she bestows her favors, let us gently remove the bandage from her eyes and shew her those worthy and inestimable objects who have an equal claim to her smiles, and whom only her caprice had neglected. The estate in Wales shall become the property of Edmund Austincourt without a flaw in the indictment if you please uncle."

Astonishment, for a moment, sat upon the countenance of Sir Mildred, which presently yielded to a smile, rapturous and genial as the rays of a bright sunbeam; while he burst forth with the following exclamation,—

"Excellent boy! generous and exalted youth! And can you indeed resign the one half of your property for the welfare of your cousin Edmund without one selfish consideration of your being impoverished by so liberal a gift! In what words can I acknowledge your kindness, in what language can I record your praise!"

To which Adolphus replied,—

"Dear Uncle, say no more, I beseech you, on this subject. I am satisfied with having made those I love happy; and if any praise be due for that, it is recorded in my own heart, from the consciousness of the purity and the integrity of my intentions."

The eyes of the venerable uncle as he directed them

towards the amiable countenance of his nephew were filled with tears very different to those produced by anguish or suffering, they were tears of gratitude to heaven, which had rewarded the merits of an exemplary son through the medium of as exemplary a nephew.

The dinner bell having twice rung to remind them that it was time to make their appearance to their guests, Sir Mildred, leaning on the arm of Adolphus, entered the saloon, and once more found himself in his old elbow chair at the head of his table.

## CHAPTER LX.



“A thousand congratulations dear Sir Mildred on your recovery” was eagerly pronounced both by Miss Villeroy and Miss Aubrey on his entrance to the saloon, who smilingly presented a hand to each of these fair creatures; while he jocosely uttered,—“But pray, have I the honor of addressing Miss Aubrey, for positively I only heard the voice of Rebecca Mantle.”

“Ah! sir, in both these characters I am greatly your debtor; and in both, permit me to offer you a return of my most sincere acknowledgments,” exclaimed Miss Aubrey with a blush which added new charms to a set of features so perfectly lovely, that Sir Mildred continued to gaze on her long after she had spoken to

him with surprise and astonishment, which indeed was most natural, when it is recollected that he had frequently conversed with this same beautiful creature in a form so different from what she now appeared. In the place of the red wig and frightful large French cap there was now a profusion of soft and bright shining dark tresses, gracefully parting over a forehead of snowy whiteness, in addition to lovely cheeks, on which the rose sometimes yielded to the fairer lily. There was a look of fresh health displayed in a pair of red and pouting lips, which, with her very dark blue eyes, formed a bewitching contrast; and in the whole contour of these lovely features, there was a combination of grace, expression, and harmony. Wholly unadorned, except that she was robed in a dress of transparent white muslin, the simplicity and elegance of her form shone to the most superior advantage; and Sir Mildred, as he placed her at the right hand side of him, could not avoid whispering to Adolphus his admiration of the loveliness of Miss Aubrey.

“Did you ever see such eyes Dolphy—such lips—such a shape? What think you of a village rose?”

“That it is worthy of being transplanted to the fairest garden in Europe sir,” uttered Adolphus.

Meanwhile, Mr. Markland had seized the hand of Miss Villeroy and led her, nothing loth, to a chair close beside, at which Sir Mildred exclaimed,—

“Marky that is not fair to lead off the prize just as my nephew was going to take possession of it.”

To which Markland, heartily laughing at his success and the slight embarrassment which Adolphus betrayed, replied,—

“Then your nephew should not have been looking

another way ; and fair or foul I have gained the victory and resolve to keep the day." So

" Turn Angelina ever dear,

" My charmer turn to me,"

was repeated by Markland in his usual extravagant manner; and this being followed by a fund of agreeable pleasantries, which he introduced with the most whimsical style, though they did not exactly " put the table in a roar," had the effect of producing universal harmony and smiles, which rendered his company a great acquisition on the present occasion. Adolphus smiled too ; and in compliment to the friends and guests of his uncle, joined to amuse them with the most social and enlivening conversation. But, as the old song says, there was something wanting to complete his felicity, and that was " the girl of his heart:" he sighed at the recollection of his beloved Theodora. And when Markland, who was an excellent melodist, gave the beautiful air of " Tell her I love her" in a style of superior excellence, it was very perceptible in the countenance of Adolphus, that he had not been insensible to its expression.

" Be gone dull care,

" I pr'ythee be gone from me."

uttered Markland, remarking, and at the same instant, wishing earnestly to change the countenance of his beloved young friend, he intreated Miss Villeroy to favor them with one of those enchanting ditties she had been singing in the morning to amuse Miss Aubrey ; to which the smiling Angelina replied,—

"Indeed Mr. Markland you mistake, it was Miss Aubrey who was amusing me. It was one of those songs she used to sing when she was Rebecca Mantle; and it is so delightful! Ah! Miss Aubrey, don't blush so, for you know you said it was one of your own making."

"Did she!" cried Mr. Markland, "then upon my honor and credit my lord Villeroy, you must persuade Miss Aubrey to sing it immediately."

"Miss Aubrey sir has no need of persuasion when she is asked to oblige her friends," uttered lord Villeroy.

And without a moment's hesitation, Rosella began to sing the following words: charming her auditors even to fascination, as they rapturously called out *encore*.

"Says a rose to a lily, much fairer art thou,

"Than I, who am queen of the bower.

"Oh! lend me thy charms, and dear lily I vow,

"I'll return them in less than an hour.

"Oh! take them sweet rose, but, remember they're mine;

"And betray not a heart in my name!

"Tho' sages and poets have called thee divine,

"No ambition have I for your fame.

"Your charms, they attract, and to love they're beguiling;

"Yet I feel what sharp pangs they impart!"

"Then what are those charms tho' so lovely and smiling,

"When a THORN is the price of your heart."

With these words Adolphus seemed excessively pleased; and in a low voice requested Miss Aubrey to favor him with a copy the ensuing morning; which she

promised to do at an early hour: while at the conclusion of her song Markland exclaimed,—

“ Thanks, thanks Miss Aubrey for your charming song ; and I would, for your fair sake, that roses had no thorns ; then would those delicate hands never be wounded by them. But, alas! to get at roses, we are often obliged to encumber ourselves with the thorns whether we like them or not.”

General conversation now ensued, when Sir Mildred suddenly turned round to Mr. Markland, and inquired how he had settled his business with his friend farmer Stubbs. “ I will tell you,” answered Mr. Markland, very humourously drawing from his pocket a large roll of paper and spreading it on the table, “ I have it all here for the entire amusement of my friends ; and farmer Stubbs has it all there,” pointing to the roll of paper. “ When I write, I always sprinkle a little acid mixture with my oil of roses to prevent the possibility of one being considered too sweet or the other too sour. But to my friend farmer Stubbs I have actually administered a dose of wormwood, which I promise you he did not relish very cordially, as it has made him the laughing stock of all his acquaintance, and the just reproach of his more intimate friends.”

To which Sir Mildred replied,—“ Pray let us hear it ;”—and Mr. Markland began in the following manner the history of Farmer Stubbs and the Dying Negro.



## ULRIC THE DYING NEGRO.

View, ye proud mortals, blest with ease and plenty,  
 A negro youth, who scarce had numbered twenty,  
 For want expiring at a christian's door,  
 Or one *so called* by all the christian poor !  
 Yes, he was blest, for he had fields of corn :  
 And yellow meadows did those fields adorn :  
 Fat sheep and lambs still to increase his store ;  
 And each returning autumn brought him more.  
 With good dried bacon was his kitchen lined ;  
 On dainty ducks, and puddings too he dined  
 And though his neighbours seldom drank his ale,  
 Yet, farmer Stubbs, could tell a christmas tale  
 As well as any ;—certain he had wit,  
 For he could talk with any London cit.  
 To all he saw, and all he ever knew,  
 'Twas, " Servant, ma'am,—My service, sir, to you."  
 Ah ! well-bred man ! he got a name in place,  
 As many do,—by putting on a face.  
 With smirks and smiles, and bowing very low,  
 He made his fortune long enough ago :  
 So farmer Stubbs profusely gave away  
 What cost him nothing, wisely too, you'll say :  
 A plan most sure to make a man content,  
 Who of prodigality could ne'er repent.  
 And Mrs. Stubbs, Oh ! what was Mrs. Stubbs indeed ?  
 Why, Mrs. Stubbs, was of the lamb-like breed :  
 And, like her Ducky, so kind and civil,  
 Poor folks wished her at the very devil.  
 Oh ! bleak was *that* morn, I well remember,  
 Near about the middle of December,  
 When chill'd to see ! all nature seem'd to mourn,  
 And wish'd that summer might again return,  
 When dews no longer wash the rose,

Nor any flow'ret in the garden grows,  
 But nought was felt but Winter's chilling blast,  
 And nought was seen but wintry clouds o'ercast,  
 When farmer Stubbs near to the fire had crept,  
 And close beside him Mrs. Stubbs she slept,  
 Then Betty, with a scream, her pail upset,  
 For, at the door, the dying black she met.  
 A rag, a tattered rag, was meant to hide,  
 The graceful form that once was Nature's pride:  
 For manly grace, and manly beauty too,  
 Dwelt in the black, unseemly now to view.  
 Alas! poor Ulric now no charms could boast,  
 Since christians dragg'd him from his native coast!  
 In vain for him a mother's tears were shed;  
 In vain a father at his feet lay dead;  
 In vain the maid that begg'd his ransom'd life,  
 The negro maid that would have been his wife!  
 Remorseless they!—the vessel bore away,  
 And Ulric never more beheld the bay  
 Of Afric's treasur'd shores. Ah! wretched slave!  
 Why did'st thou not perish in the wave?  
 For Mrs. Stubbs declared, to see a black,  
 Without a shirt upon his filthy back,  
 A sight too shocking for her nerves to bear!  
 So farmer Stubbs of course began to swear  
 And storm at Betty, who, with weeping eyes,  
 Stood by, and heard poor Ulric's plaintive cries.  
 "Of black-a-moors I've heard you talk," said she,  
 "But you're a greater black by far than he!  
 "I'll serve no more a master who would beat"  
 "A fellow creature, dying at his feet:  
 "So, madam Stubbs this night may feed the pigs!  
 "My very flesh do crawl to see such rigs!"  
 No longer able to contain his spite,  
 The farmer would have killed poor Ulric quit  
 That he should dare to kindle such a strife  
 Betwixt his maid and very loving wife,  
 And quick a bludgeon seized; but vain the blow;  
 The trembling limbs of Ulric scarce could go:

And while on Betty still his eyes he threw,  
He felt the fleeting minutes now were few:  
“ White man, farewell!” he cried, then bow’d his head;  
And farmer Stubbs beheld his victim dead!

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“ Bravo Marky, excellent!” cried Sir Mildred, when Mr. Markland had concluded his poem, much to the amusement of his friends, except that they had commiserated the situation of poor Ulric.

“ I heard of this affair of farmer Stubbs,” cried lord Villeroy, and severely reprehended him for his inhumanity to the poor black, who was actually found dead in one of his plantations the ensuing morning; having been driven from the gates of the farmer. But it proved that the poor creature had been in an expiring state many days in the neighbouring village; though, probably, owing to the blows inflicted on him by this unfeeling wretch, his sufferings were increased, and his miserable existence much sooner terminated. The farmer however disclaimed having any hand in the inhuman affair, and got clearly off; though I doubt whether his conscience is perfectly clear from the transgression.”

“ Conscience my lord!” uttered Markland, “ and can you suppose that such men as him are troubled with conscience! No, indeed, that is a visitor they do not attend to till they have done with counting over the money bags and finished their calculation of pounds, shillings, and pence. Somebody else will dot and carry one then you may rely upon it, without so much as their crying *peccavi* in the business.”

“ Yet they will one day have to settle their ac-

counts there is not a doubt of it," cried Sir Mildred, "when poor Ulric the dying Black will have as good a chance as any of them."

Here ended the history of farmer Stubbs, and the evening concluded with the social party in the same manner as it had began, with rationality, and without the aid of scandal or ill-natured insinuations being thrown out on the characters of their neighbours.

In the morning, it was the intention of Adolphus to pay an early visit to lady Theodora Percy, whom he had not lately seen, owing to the confusion and bustle which had, for several days past, been going on at the Priory. And he was impatient to be the first to inform her of the absence of two of his uncle's guests, both of whom he knew were extremely obnoxious to her feelings. Some other arrangements he also wished Theodora to be apprised of; and as he was charged with so many kind remembrances to her from the ladies and his uncle, to intreat the favor of her company shortly at the Priory. As soon as the breakfast things were removed he prepared to set out for Heath Cottage; and Sir Mildred, as Adolphus was leaving the room, exclaimed, —

Pray Dolphy be back in time for dinner, and try if you cannot prevail on Theodora to make one of our party to day. Tell her who is expected to accompany Edmund to the Priory, her favorite little good-natured Bella Montgomery, and if she does not return with your persuasions, I will see what she will do with mine and Marky's, for we will go and storm her castle by main force. Shall not we Marky?"

To which Mr. Markland replied with peculiar expression, —

“ I don’t know that I shall do any such thing: she is too sweet a creature to have any violent measures adopted with her; and I shan’t be the first to put it in practice, I promise you.”

“ Ah! Mr. Walsingham won’t be very severe with lady Theodora Percy,—will you sir?” cried the lovely Angelina, producing a laugh instantly on the countenances of the whole party, which animated the cheeks of Adolphus in a moment, and he immediately made a retreat to avoid the further lively sallies of his friends; and while the three gentlemen set out on a walk to inspect some improvements which had been making in Sir Mildred’s plantations, the two ladies being left together, entered into the following conversation; which commenced, with an inquiry of Angelina’s.—

“ You never saw Mr. Edmund Austincourt, did you Miss Aubrey?”

To which Miss Aubrey replied,—

“ Yes, once, I believe, I did. O yes, I now recollect that he came over to Avondale one morning with Sir Mildred, while lady Mountsorrel was on a visit to your mother.”

To which Angelina with a deeper colour mounting to her cheek than was usual, replied.

“ And do you remember nothing more of him than this!”

Miss Aubrey looked surprised.

“ Your inquiry is excessively odd Angelina!” answered she. “ What should I remember, but that he was Mr. Edmund Austincourt, youngest son of Sir Mildred Austincourt of the Priory.”

“ Was he in black?” demanded Angelina very art-

lessly. And Miss Aubrey could not forbear laughing while she replied,—

“ Really I don’t know ; I did not observe him very particularly.”

Angelina looked disappointed, while she retorted,—

“ But you would have observed him very particularly, Miss Aubrey, if he had been my brother.”

To which Rosella replied,—

“ That is very likely, I should have had much stronger inducements. But surely my dear girl, as an entire stranger, it would have been extremely ill-bred, and not perfectly consistent with the situation of Rebecca Mantle, to have stared Mr. Austincourt out of countenance in the house of lady Villeroy.”

“ And particularly when you did not admire him !” cried Angelina, and yet, “ I think he is almost the handsomest young man I ever saw in my life. To be sure Mr. Walsingham was always thought the handsomest of the two by all the young ladies who visited at the Priory ; but, Oh my gracious ! he is no more to be compared to his cousin Edmund, than I am to lady Theodora Percy. But I say dear Miss Aubrey, what shall I put on to day ? How ill-natured it was of lady Mountsorrel to persuade mamma that I was too young to wear French dresses and French caps : I think a French cap is so becoming. I should like to look becoming on this day above all things, because”——

“ Because what ?” inquired Miss Aubrey.

“ Because ” answered Angelina, there is company expected at the Priory to day Miss Aubrey, that is all.”

“ And because Mr. Edmund Austincourt is to make one of them :—is not that it my pretty Angelina ?”

cried Miss Aubrey, laughing; upon my word my love, you have evidently a design on the heart of the young widower, that you are so anxious to display the power of your charms."

"Ah! that would be of little use Miss Aubrey, he would never regard poor Angelina, after having married such a woman as Julia Montgomery, she was such an angel; and I have often heard him declare, that if ever he became a widower, he never would marry again."

To which Miss Aubrey replied,—

"That is of little consequence my dear, men will swear any thing, and forswear every thing, on purpose to be thought superior creatures to us women, who are considered by them wavering and inconstant: But we very well know, that men are really so, let them swear what they will; and therefore I think it very likely that Mr. Edmund Austincourt may marry again in spite of his asseverations to the contrary."

"But then Miss Aubrey, Mr. Edmund Austincourt is so particular, that I don't think it possible for any one to please him who is not as particular as himself."

Miss Aubrey smiled,—

"Well my love we will not argue about the point," uttered she, but it is very clear to me that there is somebody who wishes to try the power of pleasing him if she can."

They now retired to their chambers to dress, but Angelina had not been long there before she came breathless to Miss Aubrey to know in what manner she should arrange her hair; what ornaments she should affix in it; and whether she might wear one of her French dresses, instead of the plain white muslin

frocks which lady Villeroy had never yet permitted her to throw aside; merely because Angelina being young, it was the wish of lady Villeroy that she should appear even younger, in order that her ladyship herself might not be considered much older. An idea, so ridiculous, that it would never have entered the imagination of any but such a woman as lady Villeroy.

Meanwhile Miss Aubrey endeavoured to persuade Angelina that there was nothing so becoming to an English woman as a plain English dress: and no ornament more beautiful than the luxuriant auburn tresses with which nature had already so liberally adorned her. The consequence was that the French cap was immediately rejected for a wreath of roses; and the white frock exchanged for an elegant lace dress of Miss Aubrey's. They now descended together to the drawing room, a full hour before the expected visitants arrived; during which time, the eyes of Angelina were so often directed towards the window, that it excited the notice of lord Villeroy, who inquired, what she was looking at so intently; and as she really looked uncommonly beautiful, he could not avoid admiring her personal loveliness with a brother's partiality.

"Who, me brother! I was looking to see if Mr. Walsingham was on his return home."

"Then you are looking in a very opposite direction. Miss Villeroy," cried Mr. Markland, "for Walsingham is gone to the left, and you have been looking to the right for this half hour. But long looked for comes at last, for as I live, here is a carriage coming up the avenue, and in it are two personages, whom I take to



be Miss Bella Montgomery and Mr. Edmund Austin-court. I must instantly go and meet them."

Away flew Markland, and at the moment that Angelina was hastily retreating from the window, the voices of a fond father and affectionate son were heard mingling together in the most rapturous and heartfelt congratulations.

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## CHAPTER LIX.

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Before we return to the Priory, and to the happy party assembled there, let us take a peep at our Orphan Boy, lost, or rather transported to the fairy regions of love's creative fancy. It was the first morning that the frowns of sullen winter seemed relaxed in her dreary reign, and the sun sent forth its enlivening rays to hail the new-born little stranger which had just begun to raise its head above the surface of the earth and seemed to ask protection; it was the modest snow-drop. There was also a mildness in the air, the tenants of which, all seemed to feel the kindly influence, and warbled notes not displeasing to the ear of Adolphus as he walked over the heath, with more pleasurable sensations than he had ever felt before; and hope, enchanting hope, smiled in the perspective of the prospects which surrounded him, and he involuntarily exclaimed in the words of the inspired bard,—

“ But thou, O hope, with eyes so fair,  
“ What was thy delighted measure ?  
“ Still it whispered promised pleasure ;  
“ And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail.”

Ah ! why must we remove the mystic veil that bound his charmed senses to forgetfulness of all but love and Theodora ? Why snatch the cup filled with the balmy and nectarious draught which rosy love was now offering to his lip ? Because he was forbidden to taste of it ? No, but because a ‘mysterious power had willed that he should not enjoy those sweets till a proper season : when’ he should taste of them unaccompanied by their bitters, and in the full perfection of every charm. But whither was Adolphus wandering ? To the mansion of lady Theodora Percy. He had arrived within sight of it, and his fond and imaginary dreams of fancied happiness were quickly ended where the powers of enchantment should only have begun. When Adolphus found himself at the entrance of Heath Cottage, which was through a ‘shrubbery of rich aromatic and flowering trees, that had been collected, by lady Theodora at an exorbitant price from Italy, France, and Germany ; when his heart bounded with the extatic hope of meeting his beloved Theodora with a countenance full of love beaming smiles, and that his approach would be hailed by her with the most cordial and pleasing welcome, what was his astonishment and surprise to behold her pale, spiritless, and dejected, shrinking with retiring coldness from his ardent and impassioned gaze ; and answering his anxious and impatient inquiries after her health with an air of chilling apathy, which did not appear to be perfectly free from timidity, and even apprehension. Adolphus looked

aghast and confounded, and surveying her altered looks with an expression of the utmost alarm, exclaimed,—

“Dearest Theodora, you are really ill, and must instantly have medical assistance. You have neglected your health, to me more precious than life itself, and have incautiously exposed yourself to danger. Your hand is cold :—your looks feverish ! Oh ! tell me how you feel !”

To which lady Theodora instantly replied with a melancholy smile,—

“Is a cold hand the indication of fever ? Do not I beseech you alarm yourself unnecessarily on my account. I have no fever Walsingham, unless it is in my heart ; that, I confess is agitated and does not feel quite in its usual quiet temperature ; it is pained, it is inexpressibly grieved by some displeasing intelligence that I have received. But as to medical assistance, I require none, as I feel well convinced, there is no earthly medicine which can administer to a mind diseased such as mine now is from internal inquietude, that has, I own, for several days preyed most dreadfully on my spirits.”

Adolphus still held the hand of Theodora, he still gazed upon her face with fond solicitude ; and still regarded her with the most impassioned tenderness, and he uttered,—

“And may I not inquire into the cause of this sudden intelligence which has so seriously affected you that you have not even a smile to bestow on me. From whence has this intelligence arrived ? May I not know it Theodora ?”

“Certainly : I did not intend to keep it secret,

though it can in no way concern you. You never knew the amiable countess Molini, and it is the intelligence of her death that I have received : she died suddenly ; was a most, amiable, and accomplished woman ; and so you cannot wonder that I should deplore her loss, having been honored so long with her confidence and friendship."

It is very certain that the very moment the name of the countess Molini was mentioned by lady Theodora as the cause of her present altered appearance and depressed spirits, Adolphus suddenly dropped the lovely hand which he had been pressing only the moment before with fervour to his lips, and that he felt the approach of some sensations creeping upon him which made him regard the countenance of Theodora with the most scrutinizing and piercing inquiry, while he uttered in a sort of careless and rapid manner,—

"Of course then you have heard from your friends in Italy?"

To which Theodora, with a faint blush tinging her cheek, replied,—

"Yes, I have certainly heard from the count Molini."

"And are these all the letters which you have received," demanded Adolphus, with an air and manner totally different from what he had at first addressed her. Theodora's cheeks instantly kindled into a bright crimson ; while the eye of Adolphus was impressively fixed on her. "You make no reply," said he.

"No sir," answered Theodora, "I do not choose to reply to a question so rudely and so abruptly asked. When your inquiries wear the form of good manners, I may then feel inclined to gratify your curiosity."

"Or rather say my anxiety, my torturing anxiety," cried Adolphus, "to learn whether you still encourage a clandestine correspondence with that artful, mysterious, and perfidious Italian!"

"And suppose I were to say that I am still compelled to do so," uttered Theodora, "what would Walsingham be the better for my information?"

"No, but he would be much the worse," uttered Adolphus, "and would once more repeat what he has so often done before, his dislike, his utter abhorrence of such proceedings. By heaven! there is no female of delicacy ought to correspond privately or clandestinely with any man, unless that man were her father, her brother, or her husband."

"Then Walsingham, as you are neither, it would be equally culpable if I were to indulge in a correspondence with you," answered lady Theodora, with an air of the most provoking *non chalence*, that Adolphus, now roused to a renewal of all his former jealousies, exclaimed,

"No Theodora, I feel that I am not indeed your husband, and under existing circumstances, it is very improbable that I shall ever be inclined to aspire to the honor of that title. But this is of little moment to you, when you can freely indulge in your favorite propensities with your particular friends, while you wring with anguish the heart of that man who is pained at your folly."

Adolphus had uttered all this with the passionate warmth of the most violent disorder of a wounded and agitated mind, and he paced the room without once looking at her, whom he had so resentfully addressed, till a convulsive sob, which seemed bursting from a

powerfully surcharged heart, directed his eyes once more towards her ; and one momentary glance of her now pale and beautiful features bathed in tears, with her hands crossed over her bosom, which seemed to palpitate with the strongest emotion, instantly subdued and calmed his anger : while Theodora in mournful and most affecting accents repeated,—

“ Would that I had indeed a husband, a protector, a faithful friend to guide and direct, to save, to defend me from this merciless cruelty and unceasing and unmerited persecution ; or would that I could find relief in that land of celestial spirits where my father is gone, for there should I be at peace.”

Instantly Adolphus was at her feet : he wept, he sued, he implored of Theodora to pardon his rash, unthinking and impetuous conduct ; imputed it to the warmth of his temper, and was again as gentle and penitent as he had been violent and resentful.

“ Dearest Theodora, will you not say that you pardon me,” uttered he.

To which she replied,—

“ I must pardon every one, even they who have deeply injured me : I pardoned lady Austincourt ; I pardoned Frederic ; and I feel that I must yet pardon another who is the author and the source of all my present sufferings ; and yet this individual is not you Walsingham, it is Antonia ! Antonia is the present cause of all my disquietude—anxiety—mortification—grief—— Yet I do not hesitate to pronounce, that he is at the same instant the object of my tenderest pity and compassionate attention.”

“ May fires—plague—pestilence—and”——

Adolphus paused : he had never yet invoked a

curse on mortal, and he trembled to pronounce it: while Theodora taking his hand, he immediately became composed, only uttering,—

No, Theodora, I will not curse any of God's creatures; but are you not convinced, that this Antonia is of all, to Walsingham, the most obnoxious, the most hateful.

To which Theodora replied,—

"And yet you have no just pretensions to dislike him. Be but patient, dearest Walsingham, till time unfolds this mysterious link in the destiny of Theodora, and happiness and honor will yet crown our virtuous, though chequered, loves."

Adolphus on these words again became the most transported and blessed of human beings.

"Are you serious my angel?" uttered he.

To which Theodora immediately replied,—

"As serious as I should be in that parting hour when I should change a mortal for an immortal and immutable existence."

Calmer moments now succeeding, Adolphus exclaimed,—

Oh Theodora! I never more will doubt your truth and constancy!" And he now immediately disclosed all he had intended to do when he first set out from the Priory relative to the situation of the now happy Miss Aubrey and of the absence of the two highly offended fair ones, lady Mountsorrel and lady Villeroy; at which lady Theodora could not resist laughing most heartily; while she equally rejoiced in the good fortune of her favorite Rosella. Adolphus then intreated his beloved Theodora to accompany him back to the Priory. "Where I dare say," added he, "that Edmund and Miss Montgomery are already

arrived, and where my Theodora is most anxiously expected,—

To which lady Theodora replied,—

“ I do not know whether Edmund’s being at the Priory would be any inducement for my going there; but I am really impatient to see my dear Rosella now she has got rid of the hump on her back and that bewitching red wig, which so completely answered the purpose it was designed for, that of veiling her charms from the observation of lord Villeroy, who has indeed acted most nobly. Would to heaven that every betrayer of female innocence would learn to emulate his lordship’s honorable example !”

At this moment a little plaintive voice was very distinctly heard at the door, and “ Let Fanny in” was uttered in a tone which made it difficult to know whether the little suppliant was laughing or crying. The door was instantly opened by Adolphus, and in strutted little Frances, eagerly running into the arms of lady Theodora, who straining her to her lovely bosom almost devoured her with kisses.

“ Your little *protégé* improves wonderfully,” cried Adolphus, “ she is certainly a most lovely child.”

“ And yet your uncle will not acknowledge it,” returned Theodora. “ Nay, he absolutely dislikes the sweet innocent.”

“ Impossible !” exclaimed Adolphus, looking very intently on her white plump neck, around which was a necklace of immense value. Lady Theodora instantly unclasped it, while her countenance betrayed the utmost embarrassment and confusion as she arose and placed it in a small ivory cabinet, but not before the eyes of Adolphus had glanced towards the gold clasp, on which he very plainly distinguished th



initials F. A. ; but without noticing this circumstance to Theodora, he determined to bear them in his memory : while she, wholly unconscious of his having perceived them, carelessly remarked, that it was foolish of Brunette to put a necklace on the child of such value, and which indeed, she added, did not belong to her.

"To whom does it belong then," inquired Adolphus.

Without a moment's hesitation lady Theodora replied,—

"To her mother, her unfortunate mother:" and Adolphus was again lost in wonder and mystery.

In the meantime the carriage had been ordered, and lady Theodora, making but a very slight change in her dress, after having kissed the rosy cheek of her little foundling, accompanied the once more happy Adolphus to Austincourt Priory ; where they arrived just in time to sit down to a most splendid and magnificent dinner, prepared for Sir Mildred's long expected guests.

"Oh, my gracious! here is lady Theodora Percy," cried Angelina, "how beautiful she looks:—does she not Miss Aubrey?"

"Yet you see how plainly she is adorned Miss Villeroy," cried Mr. Markland, glancing his eyes full at the wreath of red roses in Angelina's hair. "She is always dressed with the most elegant simplicity, and consequently always looks well."

Angelina blushed, and whispered to Miss Aubrey, that she believed Mr. Markland was quizzing her wreath of roses: she wished she had not put it on.

Dear Rosella! dear Bella! and dear Angelina! were successively pronounced by lady Theodora on her entrance to the room, not wishing to appear particular of them : though with the former, she longed

to have some private conversation, this was not a moment when it could be reasonably adopted.

Edmund Austincourt in the meantime had some little private conversation with his father after having been formally introduced to Miss Aubrey and lord Villeroy; in which it is probable that Sir Mildred had acquainted him with every recent transaction that had passed at the Priory, for he returned to the drawing-room in high spirits, his salutation to lady Theodora being most cordial and sincere. In short, Edmund instantly perceived the happy understanding which had taken place between his beloved cousin and lady Theodora, and concluded from appearances so favorable, that the perfect innocence of this fair creature, with respect to her late mysterious conduct with signior Antonia had entirely been established on the mind of Adolphus, whose spirits were, on this day, more highly exhilarated than ever he had seen them; and when they were alone for a few moments, Edmund most heartily congratulated him on his present prospects with the lovely object of his affections, and hoped the period was not very far distant when he should hail him as the happy husband of lady Theodora Percy.

“Ah! I do not yet know Edmund,” uttered Adolphus, “when that transporting moment may arrive; though I have some reason to believe that Theodora loves me, yet she persists in a refusal of our union taking place till some mysteries are clearly elucidated.”

“And can you blame her,” cried Edmund, “surely not. What permanent felicity could result between you, were mystery and doubt still to haunt and perplex your mind.”

“As to this Italian, he is doubtless the father of little Frances; it is the mother who is wrapped up in

impenetrable mystery, and must be brought to light. You see, Theodora would not even reveal to my father, the knowledge of who the mother is. But, apropos Dolphy, how came you to be so distant in your reception of poor Bella when you came in, you absolutely scarcely spoke to her; while the agitation of the lovely girl was visible to every beholder."

To which Adolphus with an air of gravity replied,—

"To what purpose would you have me be more particular to Miss Montgomery than what good manners demands? Why should I encourage the heart of this amiable creature to cherish impressions which might be dangerous to her peace, and conclusively, render me miserable, in a supposition that I had in any degree contributed to render her so. This would not only be preposterous vanity in me Edmund, but it would also be absolute cruelty, which I should despise myself were I ever to be guilty of. Ah! even were my lovely Theodora to be colder to me than alpine snows, this faithful and devoted heart could never beat for another."

Edmund was silent, for he could refute no argument so just, so prudent, and so honorable; and though he wished to see the lovely sister, of his departed Julia happy, he could not reasonably but adopt the sentiments of his beloved cousin, nor deny that he would not act with the same consistency were he so circumstanced with lady Theodora Percy.

Some conversation now passed relative to the unfortunate affair of Frederic:—

"To whom I have written but received no answer," cried Adolphus. "In short, I offered my services in in any way he should reasonably require. But I do not know what to think of him: he appears to regret

the friendship, as well as to avoid the attention, of his most particular acquaintances."

To which Edmund replied,—

"I have had some painful and distressing conversation with my father on the subject of my brother's embarrassments, as well as on the unhappy event which has so recently taken place in his domestic affairs; and though I would not unnecessarily alarm the fears of my father, yet, I am not without some serious apprehensions on Frederic's account. I know his violent, impetuous, and, I am sorry to add, vindictive spirit, which may lead him to seek revenge on the base destroyer of his peace; though for the loss of such a woman, I would not endanger my existence."

"Have you indeed any reason to suppose that Frederic will meet the vile colonel Macpherson," inquired Adolphus.

"Who is a professed and notorious duellist," returned Edmund. "Frederic, from whom I received a letter when the affair took place, informed me that the fugitives had flown to Paris; that he had traced their route as far as St. Cloud, and was resolved instantly to follow them. Now I am to conclude that he has gone to Paris, from which place he has never returned, both mine and Sir Mildred's letters remain yet unanswered."

"In that case I am fearful of the result," cried Adolphus. "Provided that Frederic has overtaken them, a duel will most likely terminate the affair between them."

Edmund shook his head, and confessing that he entertained the most alarming apprehensions for his brother's safety, they both returned together to the drawing-room, where they found lady Theodora in the very

midst of her fair friends conversing on a variety of topics with most engaging affability and condescension; and Mr. Markland, stationed at the back of Angelina's chair, was entertaining the whole company with his humorous and whimsical conversation. And on the entrance of Edmund and Adolphus he exclaimed,—

“So Walsingham, we have found out the lady of the lake, who so greatly alarmed you by the banks of the river; it was no other than the fair Rosella, and there she is to answer for herself.”

“And for heaven's sake, Miss Aubrey, what could induce you to utter a cry so fearful?” uttered Adolphus.

To which Miss Aubrey, smiling, replied,—

“Sir, I had lost my wig, which was very nearly blown into the river by the violence of the wind; and on my attempting to recover my then inestimable treasure, a large water-dog rushed upon the bank, and, at that moment, I certainly did scream with terror, and ran as fast as possible out of his reach; fearful, not only of losing my wig, but of being pursued by the animal.”

“And it was fortunate that we did not overtake you,” cried lord Villeroy, “for then Rosella, your ingenious disguise would no longer have been necessary to conceal you from my observation”—

“Or veil those charms from the admiring eye,” uttered Markland. “Here however you ladies possess a superior advantage over us blind and infatuated creatures. We cannot contrive so aptly all those pretty little disguises, and charming stratagems by which you lead us step by step into a perfect maze; and there you leave us spell-bound by your mystic charms and bewitching incantations. Still woman,

with all thy faults, I adore thee ! and I am frequently led to exclaim with the enamoured Jaffier when he thus addresses his lovely Belvidera,—

“ Oh, woman ! lovely woman !

“ Angels were painted fair to look like you.

“ There is in thee all that we believe of heaven :

“ Amazing brightness, purity, and truth,

“ Everlasting joy and love.”

“ And men had been brutes without you,” concluded Markland, as he very gallantly bowed to the whole of the ladies there assembled.

The carriage of lady Theodora was ordered at an early hour, and she apologized to Sir Mildred for the abruptness of her departure.

“ My servants,” cried she, are always in readiness at this hour : they know my plan, I always go to bed early, in order that I may rise early in the morning. I cannot endure midnight revels ; and it is no wonder that I am taken on that account for one of the most unfashionable creatures in nature.”

“ But Nature has done more for you lady Theodora, than she has for the most part of them,” uttered Mr. Markland, “ she has given you the fine glow of health to your complexion, without having it exported from the Rue de Parise, or the Opera à la Grand. You have the bloom of roses which ‘ Nature’s own hand hath cunningly laid on ;’ and it is not in the power of all their combined arts either to match its excellence, or imitate its perfection.”

On this direct and pointed compliment, lady Theodora arose, and courtesied gracefully to all Sir Mildred’s guests ; and extending her fair hand to Mr.

Markland, uttered, in a tone of the most playful and fascinating sweetness,—

“ I do not know Markland what you mean to add to my complexion, but I see you have a design to add to my vanity. For heaven’s sake, how am I to support all this effusion of compliment without thinking of my personal attractions; and by this means, you will do me the most material mischief imaginable. I shall study my looking-glass when I ought to be darning my stockings.”

The kindest invitation being given to all the party, Theodora tripped down stairs, with Adolphus on one side and Markland on the other. Not without the former whispering something in her ear which called forth a blush and a smile of the most enchanting and beautiful variety; and her ladyship’s carriage immediately drove from the door.

## CHAPTER LX.



The time being positively limited for the visit of Edmund Austincourt at the Priory, he was early apprised of the honor intended him by lord-Villeroy; and a very few days after the happy party had assembled at Sir Mildred’s, a day was appointed for the celebration of the nuptials of his lordship with his beloved Rosella Aubrey; which were to be solemnized in the gothic chapel of the Priory, that, at the beginning of this history, had afforded a shelter to Sir Mildred Austincourt and his family when the consuming flames were destroying his magnificent mansion. It was a memo-

nable place in the recollection of our Orphan Boy : for here had he miraculously preserved the life of Miss Grandison ; and here had Theodora first discovered that he was an object worthy of her attention ;—here had she solicited assistance to save the life of Camilla Grandison ;—and here she had pointed to his wounded arm when all else were unmindful of the danger he had undergone. To this circumstance alone may be attributed the veneration of Adolphus for the old gothic structure ; and he determined that, if ever the happy day arrived when he should call Theodora his own, in this place his nuptials should be performed.

Every arrangement necessary for the wedding was now put in active preparation, and all was bustle, and confusion, and every face wore a smile beneath the roof of Austincourt Priory. Notwithstanding this, Edmund began seriously to entertain some alarming fears for the fate of his brother Frederic, though only imparted in confidence to Adolphus ; and they dreaded lest any intelligence should suddenly arrive to damp the spirits of the bridal party. Meanwhile Rosella had not failed to pay an early visit to Heath Cottage, where doubtless she had been enjoying some private conference with her lovely friend, the nature of which had the effect of making her look excessively grave on her return in spite of her utmost efforts to hide it from the observation of her friends, and particularly from the piercing eye of Adolphus, and lord Villeroy exclaimed,—

“ Why Rosella, one would imagine that you had been inviting your friend to be present at a funeral instead of a wedding. Why so pensive my angel ? ”

“ I have been making the same observation,” uttered Adolphus, looking towards Miss Aubrey with an air



of keen inquiry, "there is nothing the matter with your lovely friend I hope!"

To which Miss Aubrey, not without betraying some small degree of embarrassment, replied,—

"Dear me, no, Mr. Walsingham, lady Theodora is quite well I assure you. Only we have been talking a great deal about one thing or other, and it has given me an intolerable head-ache."

This reply silenced all further inquiry on the subject of Theodora, although it was evident from the manner of Miss Aubrey, that something had that morning either given her pain or displeasure.

Another day was now only to intervene between that appointed for the marriage of lord Villeroy, and this the whole party had been invited to spend at Heath Cottage; and as the weather was remarkably fine for the season of the year, it was proposed that they should set out at an early hour in lord Villeroy's carriage. Edmund and Adolphus however preferred walking; and Sir Mildred, lord Villeroy, Mr. Markland, and the three ladies occupied the carriage, which arrived a full hour before the pedestrians; and Adolphus and Edmund found the whole party engaged in inspecting the beautiful gardens and plantations that were laid out with the most exquisite taste; there was every thing in this sequestered and lovely retreat which could charm the curious as well as gratify the admiring eye. There were meandering streams, serpentine walks, embowering shades, and lovely hermitages so retired and adapted for meditation, that here the lonely recluse might have wandered for ever without his hallowed haunts being intruded upon by mortal eye. There was a shrubbery too, which was imperious even to the sunny ray; and on each side were in-

numerable banks of the double-blossomed violet that sent forth the most delicious perfumes, and breathed their balmy fragrance through the air: while in other parts of this bewitching retreat were a gay assemblage of the most beautiful exotics of rare and choice collection.

Lady Theodora had received her guests with the most cordial welcome and enlivening smiles. She seated Sir Mildred at the head of her table, and insisted that he should do the honors in compliment to her guests, and a magnificent repast crowned the festive board, conducted without formality or ostentation, and in which there was plenty without profusion.

Markland, ever good humoured and ever gay, shone brightly in his native character. The spirits of Sir Mildred were more than usually animated. The ride had been serviceable to all parties. The complexion of Miss Aubrey glowed with opening roses; and lady Theodora looked like an enchantress waving with her magic wand, all hearts, all eyes towards her.

In this moment of universal harmony, and when the shades of evening had already drawn around them without any interruption to the charms of a day most delightfully spent in each other's society; while the ladies were deep in conversation, and Sir Mildred had entered into some arguments with his friend Markland, in which lord Villeroy took an active part, Adolphus and Edmund stole out of the room into an adjoining apartment laid out with refreshments for the evening.

"Let us stroll into the shrubbery for a few moments," cried Edmund, after helping himself to a glass of lemonade. "It is cool and refreshing, and I am excessively warm."

Adolphus immediately assented, and putting his

arm through Edmund's, they sallied forth. The freshness of the air was delightful. The moon shone brightly, and as they inhaled the fragrance of each opening flower, the spirits of Adolphus rose to the most animated pitch, and he rapturously exclaimed to Edmund,

“And will the fairy scenes which now deck my fancy with hopes so joyous, so transporting, be ever mine? 'Tis Theodora which must create a Paradise around me, Edmund! It is Theodora who, emerging from dark shades of mystery and concealment—

At these words a figure glanced out of the hermitage, and darted like lightning through the midst of the embowering shades.

Adolphus grasped the arm of Edmund—

“Did you behold that, Edmund,” uttered he.

To which Edmund, alarmed at his expressions and manner, replied cautiously—

“I beheld something in the shape of a human form come out of the hermitage, but I am certain I cannot precisely say whether it had the appearance of male or female.”

“I am then more quick sighted than you are,” cried Adolphus with the most passionate vehemence. “It was a man, and I will instantly follow him and know what business he has here.”

“I conjure you not,” exclaimed Edmund, but Adolphus was already out of hearing. He had flown beyond the possibility of overtaking him till he entirely lost sight of him through the dark foliage of the trees; blaming his impetuosity, however, and suspecting that the mysterious intruder could never come there for any good and honourable purpose. Edmund hastened to find his path out of the shrubbery, intending to

make some inquiry of the domestics, and to inform lady Theodora of the incident which had occurred.

But Adolphus had already saved him that trouble ; he had arrived before him in breathless haste, and the first sentence that he pronounced on his again beholding Edmund, was the following, uttered in a voice of phrenzy—

“ I have discovered the perfidy of Theodora ! She is false—she is abandoned—she is lost—Oh ! Edmund, lost to me for ever !

In vain did Edmund attempt to dissuade Adolphus from rushing into the presence of lady Theodora, till the violent disorder of his spirits had in some degree subsided : in vain his attempt to detain him only for a few short moments, till the phrenzy which had entirely taken possession of his distracted features had produced some change : but he might with as little probability have calmed the fury of the tempestuous ocean, or stilled the roaring of the winds, or chained down the hungry lion when first it darts impetuous on its destined prey.

He rushed from the outstretched arms of Edmund, and flew on the instant, or rather staggered into the presence of the astonished, alarmed, and surprised party, and immediately approaching lady Theodora, whose countenance was lighted up, with the most heavenly smiles, saluted her in the following manner :

“ Oh ! thou fairest and cunningest pattern of nature’s workmanship ! Thou too lovely smiling mischief, what hast thou achieved by thy specious arts and deceptions ? the certain destruction of him who has been destined to adore thee, and will not now survive thy dishonour ! Oh, Theodora ! thou hast undone me ! and nature will not long support the conflict !”

Consternation, surprise, wonder, and amazement, sat on every countenance there present.

Sir Mildred arose from his chair, and seizing the arm of his nephew, exclaimed—

“Almighty Powers ! what is the cause of this distraction ? Edmund I demand, I insist upon an explanation of this unheard of, this extraordinary conduct, what does it mean ? what has occasioned it ? You and Dolphy have not been half an hour absent from the present company ; you went out in your sober senses, and have now returned to it in a state apparently of intoxication or insanity.”

To which Edmund replied—

“I cannot, my dear Sir, explain what I do not know ; all I can tell you is, that Adolphus and myself had strolled together as far as the shrubbery, where we were conversing as calmly and quietly as possible, when suddenly we perceived a strange figure dart out of the little hermitage, and my cousin persisted in following the footsteps of the unknown. He rushed from my presence, and I remained behind ; on my return to the cottage I found Adolphus in the disorder you now see. I can tell you nothing more of the matter.”

Sir Mildred now looked sternly at his nephew.

“Then I must apply to you, Mr. Walsingham, for further particulars,” uttered he.

When Adolphus exclaimed—

“Ah ! would to Heaven that Walsingham had no longer the power of revealing the dark tale ! then would it sink to oblivion as it now sinks to infamy, to perdition. Oh, Theodora !”

“For Heavens sake I implore you to speak !” cried Sir Mildred, “or you will drive me frantic, whither

residence of lady Theodora Percy ! She is lost ! she is fallen ! she is unworthy of"——

At this moment a loud and piercing shriek assailed their ears and arrested their attention ; and " hold barbarians !" was uttered in the most uncontrollable emotion and despair. The door burst open, and the same figure which Adolphus had before beheld in the hermitage and had followed to the bedchamber of lady Theodora Percy (for it was certainly true that it had flown for refuge) now presented itself before them. It was the mysterious 'Antonia,' who instantly approaching Sir Mildred, and throwing himself at his feet, pronounced—

" On me let Sir Mildred Austincourt invoke his vengeance ! on my devoted head let Walsingham pour forth all his curses ! crush me to atoms ! treat me like the abject thing I am, but spare, oh ! spare, that pitying angel from further condemnation ! Here let the scene of her persecution for ever end, whose only crime, whose only fault, has been to save a wretched mother and a helpless child—the child of Fanny Roseberry !"

" Fanny Roseberry !" exclaimed Sir Mildred.

" Fanny Roseberry !" repeated Edmund.

" Yes," cried the weeping suppliant, " the mysterious Antonia who now kneels before you and Fanny Roseberry are the same ;" and instantly unloosing the Spanish cloak, which concealed her figure, and throwing from off her head a large Spanish hat and feather, the form of the unfortunate injured Fanny, though no longer blooming and young, appeared to the view of all the petrified and astonished beholders ; but more especially to the perplexed and bewildered senses of Adolphus, and the conviction of his enraged uncle.

“Now, sir, is there yet a doubt of the evidence of your senses?” cried she, addressing the heart-struck Adolphus, and then turning with a mournful and inexpressibly touching air towards Sir Mildred, “or of yours, sir? You both behold Fanny Roseberry, and the mother of the little Italian foundling, preserved from the stern frowns of a cruel and unnatural father, by the sacrifice of the peace and happiness of that angel there! (pointing to lady Theodora) — she, who bound by the nature of an oath to lady Austincourt and her remorseless son, felt it impossible to reveal, even to the objects she most loved, and by whom she has been so long enthralled, and from which she is now emancipated by the confession of Fanny Roseberry; and therefore she is free. Yes, brightest pattern of unrivalled excellence, it is Fanny who now absolves you from your oath—the nature of which has so cruelly and so long involved you in mystery and dark concealment. It is I, who in confessing that I am the mother of that fostered child, so tenderly preserved by your care, so kindly cherished by your protection, that bursts open the fetters by which you have so long been imprisoned, in a solemn asseveration of your innocence, in all that respects that fostered child—the child of Frederic Austincourt and Fanny Roseberry.”

“Fanny, I entreat you to compose yourself,” cried lady Theodora, gently approaching her, and placing her in a chair, while Miss Aubrey kindly supported her almost fainting form, “you have been ill, you are still suffering from the effects of indisposition,” continued lady Theodora, taking her by the hand, “and beneath my roof I will not permit any one to treat you with unkindness, or approach you with impunity.”

did you follow the steps of the mysterious stranger? who was he? what was he?"

"A man!" exclaimed Adolphus, "and I followed him!" Adolphus looked yet more wildly, and grasped the hand of his now alarmed uncle.

"Where?" cried Sir Mildred; "where did you follow him?"

"Into the bedchamber of lady Theodora Percy!" exclaimed he.

"Into the bedchamber of lady Theodora Percy," repeated Sir Mildred, looking aghast and confounded by intelligence which he so little expected.

"Where I would have pulverised him into atoms," returned the furious Adolphus, "but that the vile reptile has this once escaped my vengeance. He closed the door, and it is now locked! In Theodora's chamber is he now concealed!"

"Your senses wander, nephew," cried Sir Mildred, "Recover yourself, I cannot believe your assertion."

"By Heaven it is true!" uttered Adolphus.

The countenance of lady Theodora, though it had successively changed, and was even agitated during the whole of this scene, was yet undismayed, and betrayed no signs of fear, shame, or embarrassment; but in a voice firm and indignant, she turned towards Sir Mildred, while she exclaimed—

"By Heavens it is false, Sir Mildred! Rosella! dear Rosella! you know that it is false!"

Miss Aubrey immediately approached her friend, and while tears almost choked her utterance, faltering exclaimed—

"Yes, I do indeed know that it is false! Solemnly do I protest that what Mr. Walsingham has just



uttered is a foul and slanderous accusation against the character of lady Theodora Percy!"

"And pray Miss Aubrey by what authority do you contradict the evidence of my senses?" demanded Adolphus.

To which Miss Aubrey replied, casting a look at the same time on Adolphus of the most indignant reproach.

"By the evidence of my own, Sir. Lady Theodora has no man concealed in her bedchamber. I will defy the malice of her most rancorous enemies, if any such she has merited, to prove the credibility of such a tale."

"Then by the Eternal Powers I beheld one enter there," cried Adolphus. "And by that same Power which I now invoke, he shall not stir from hence till I have seen him! till one or other of us, or both perish!"

Adolphus was now rushing wildly out, but Edmund and Mr. Markland forcibly detained him.

At length Sir Mildred addressed lady Theodora.

"Infatuated girl!" uttered he, "and will you answer nothing to unravel this horrible mystery? are you innocent? or have you merited the accusation of my nephew?"

To which lady Theodora, crossing her hands over her bosom, firmly ejaculated—

"All but this I could have borne! all but this I could have supported! Oh! my God! in this trying hour grant me yet fortitude, as thou hast already given me patience!"

"Let us instantly depart," cried Sir Mildred. "This place is no longer a proper scene for any of us! Nephew! Edmund! I command you both to quit the

"As she will be the darling of my old age," cried Sir Mildred, now more composed, and placing little Frances on his knee) I shall never look at her without remembering the events of one day passed at Heath Cottage."

Markland, who now really felt for the painful situation of poor Adolphus, yet knew not how to befriend him on the present occasion, immediately exclaimed, "And I dare say, that my friend Walsingham will have as much reason to remember the events of this day as any of us."

"Oh! sir, he will have a great deal more," uttered lady Theodora, with an arch smile; "for what do you think the events of this day will lead him to, much earlier than ever he expected?"

Markland looked surprized; and in some confusion replied,

"Why really, lady Theodora, I cannot pretend to say."

To which, to the astonishment of all present, she laughingly replied,

"To matrimony, Mr. Markland; and lady Theodora most heartily congratulates Mr. Walsingham on the occasion. Nay, she wishes to testify her joy more sincerely, by shaking hands with him, in the presence of all his friends, if he will please to venture a little nearer."

Poor Adolphus, whose eyes had never been removed from the ground ever since the discovery of Fanny Roseberry, now flew, almost transported, to the side of his enchantress, and seizing her lovely unreluctant hand, would have devoured it with kisses, had she not blushing disengaged it, while she archly enquired if he had recovered his senses

To which he replied,

“ Yes, loveliest and dearest creature, never again to wander in doubt, nor be confounded by mystery.”

“ Nor blinded by prejudice !” exclaimed Theodora; “ love should ever repose on the breast of confidence, and then honour is its safeguard : it is a sacred talisman, which, while it is preserved, will defend its faithful votaries, as that sweet flower which, even when its leaves have fallen, still exhales its balmy fragrance to prove that its virtues are lasting and unperishable.

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## CHAPTER LXI.

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After an interval, in which the really now happy and delighted friends had partaken of some refreshments, Fanny related the sequel of her unhappy story, at the express desire of Sir Mildred Austincourt, in the following words : —

“ There was a time when the blush of shame would have burned indignant on this cheek, to have permitted a disclosure of circumstances so painful to my own feelings, and so disgraceful and heart-wounding to the feelings of another, but justice to the unexampled conduct of that matchless excellence warrants no concealment of what has hitherto appeared mysterious and doubtful in the actions of lady Theodora Percy.

“ Soon as the nature of my indiscretion became known to you, Sir Mildred, soon as my agonizing feel-

In the mean time, Sir Mildred had covered his face with his handkerchief; and Adolphus, overwhelmed with grief and at once penetrated with shame, contrition, and despair, had retired to the most distant part of the room, not daring to lift up his eyes to that dear object whom he had so cruelly wounded and so unjustly accused. He was not forsaken, however, by the consoling voice of Edmund, who occasionally whispered him to take courage.

But Markland, lord Villeroy, and the three ladies, all flocked around poor Fanny and her lovely protectress, whose strong and powerful emotion having been seasonably relieved by a copious shower of tears, she began to address Sir Mildred, who mildly entreated that, in the first moments of her returning composure, she would not conceal from his knowledge any part of the base conduct of Frederic or lady Austincourt towards lady Theodora Percy or herself, as he was prepared to hear the very worst of his son, and was therefore not surprized at any transaction, however vile, which had passed between him and his mother; "and with respect to your own injuries, my poor girl," said Sir Mildred, "you have sustained many; and yet, I thank heaven, that you are at last the happy instrument of restoring peace to a disturbed family, and clearing all ungenerous suspicions against the bright unsullied fame of that best and excellent creature of whom I now implore pardon and forgiveness."—Already had Sir Mildred's hand been stretched out towards the snowy one of lady Theodora, who, with an air of the most fascinating sweetness, drew her's back with one of her sportive smiles.

"What, Theodora!" cried Sir Mildred, "and do you reject a peace-offering from me too? Alas! my

child, I am already torn by conflicts too great almost for the nature of my weak infirmities to support; and I would not go down to the grave with resentment on my head. I have forgiven poor Fanny—Frederic was the cause of her indiscretion; but I have not forgiven him, nor do I know that I shall forgive him till I receive pardon from you.”

“Dear Theodora, will you not forgive my father?” cried Edmund, now approaching lady Theodora, and respectfully taking her hand:—

“Yes, when he has forgiven another whom he has most offended,” uttered she: “me he has not. I protest I never was offended with any one; but Sir Mildred has greatly offended my little Frances; and he must make it up with her before he can be reconciled to Theodora again.”

The attendant was rung for, and the child immediately brought in; and lady Theodora taking it in her arms, approached Sir Mildred. He held out his arms towards it; she, smiling little innocent, clasped him round the neck—she was pressed to the heart of her grandfather; but Sir Mildred could not articulate a sentence. Nature prevailed over pride, and feeling conquered remorseless prejudice! He burst into tears; and Fanny Roseberry, the poor deserted injured Fanny, sobbed aloud; nor were the spectators of this affecting scene unmoved. Miss Aubrey and Angelina both shed tears. While the lovely, the animated Theodora, now pressed the hand of Sir Mildred to her lips, rapturously and smilingly exclaiming,

“Now, my dear Sir Mildred, I am your Theodora again; and the happy happy Theodora of all my friends! Let this child ever be the hostage of love between us.”

ings were unfolded to you by the letter which I left under my pillow, I for ever quitted the roof of Austin-court Priory; but, with shame I confess it, was not without the knowledge of my betrayer: he knew of the place of my concealment, as also did lady Austin-court. It was at a cottage on the Heath; and while my poor, unhappy, and distracted parents mourned the death of their lost Fanny, she was kept a prisoner there by the seductive arts of him who had destroyed her.

“ For a while Frederica endeavoured to tranquilize the distracted state of my poor disordered mind, and I thought that he loved me; but vain was that hope, and delusive that fond expectation, for one morning he appeared before me almost furious and wild, and sternly questioned me about Mr. Adolphus Walsingham.

“ ‘ Are you certain that you have neither seen or conversed with my cousin,’ uttered he; and I answered him in the negative.

“ ‘ Then I am safe,’ replied he; and by this time he has fled for ever from the vengeance of my father.

“ I demanded an explanation of words so extraordinary; but what language could paint the anguish of my feelings when he informed me that Mr. Walsingham was suspected to be the betrayer of Fanny Roseberry; and was in consequence disgraced, despised, and driven from the abode of his uncle.

“ ‘ Almighty powers, Frederic!’ uttered I, ‘ and can you suffer your cousin to remain under the imputation of so gross and infamous an aspersion, when you know that he is innocent? would you have him thought guilty? And his reply was,—

“ ‘One of us must be thought guilty, and I am resolved that it shall be Adolphus, the so greatly admired, the so greatly loved Orphan Boy ! In short, I have already settled his business with my father and with every one in the family except Edmund and the old maid Camilla Grandison : they alone think that he is innocent ; but I will defy him to prove it !’

“ ‘ Oh, Frederic, how,’ uttered I. To which he instantly replied, —

“ ‘ By binding him down to the most sacred oath that it is possible for man to take in the sight of heaven ! I made him swear that he never would betray this secret to my father : he has taken the oath, and now dares not retract from it : he was accused, and is now fled from the Priory !’

“ Do not suppose me to be unmoved by the perfidy of Frederic’s conduct. I wept ; I implored of him to suffer me to clear the innocence of your injured nephew. ‘ I will go to Sir Mildred myself,’ uttered I, when a voice pronounced ‘ At your peril,’ and that voice was lady Austincourt’s. ‘ Insolent, presuming wretch,’ exclaimed she, ‘ and would you yet add destruction to the unhappiness and shame that you have already brought upon my darling Frederic ! But I shall take good care of your pretty person I promise you. I will put you under lock and key till Frederic can get rid of you. I shall ship you off as soon as possible ; and when Frederic is married to lady Theodora Percy, which he is going to do immediately, then perhaps I may send for you back again.’

“ Sir Mildred, I certainly did not hear any more from the lips of lady Austincourt, for I had happily sunk insensible to the consciousness of my situation. On my recovery, I found myself alone ; deserted at

once by my cruel betrayer and his more inhuman mother."

At this part of poor Fanny's narration, Sir Mildred could scarcely refrain from expressing his abhorrence against the conduct of his remorseless son; and turning towards Fanny, with an air of the most compassionate kindness, he exclaimed,—

"Poor victim of thy own credulity and man's perfidious and cruel arts, well mayest thou curse the author of your sufferings, well may you despise the memory of lady Austincourt."

And Fanny, in a voice yet more tremulous, resumed her tale.

"I had not beheld Frederic for several weeks, yet I was daily visited by lady Austincourt, who had of late, adopted an air of less severity towards me; the cause of which I was soon informed of, as one evening she came suddenly to the cottage and told me, that I must instantly go with her to Austincourt Priory.

"To Sir Mildred," uttered I, to which she haughtily replied,—

"Have you the insolence to interrogate me as to what I intend to do with you. It is enough that you will be handsomely provided for, which is more than you deserve, after all the uneasiness that you have brought into my family; however, in a few days you will set sail for Italy, where you will be kindly received by the count Molini, who is now on the eve of marriage with a lady of the most exalted rank; but previous to this event, you will be placed as a boarder in the convent of St. Julien, where you will remain till some further arrangements can be made for you. In the meantime, I would recommend you Miss Fanny, to be patient and obedient; you will find it will be



the only way to insure my further intentions of kindness towards you. Come, are you ready, are you prepared to follow me ?”

“ I hastily threw on a hat and scarf, unable either to contend with, or oppose the commands of my inflexible tyrant. All I ventured to pronounce was, ‘ May I be permitted to see Frederic, and implore a blessing of my father and mother before I depart for Italy.’

“ ‘ Frederic you will, shortly see,’ answered lady Austincourt, ‘ he is now waiting to see you with lady Theodora Percy on some most particular business with which your presence is immediately concerned before it can be finally settled. ‘ You perceive you are a person of vast consequence Miss Fanny ; but as to permitting you to see the old folks, that you cannot do, since they are beyond our reach and ultimately provided for.’

“ ‘ I do not understand your ladyship,’ uttered I, ‘ for heaven’s sake I implore you to tell me what is become of my dear parents?’ To which lady Austincourt tauntingly replied,—

“ ‘ They are both dead, for which they are to thank the indiscretion of their pretty daughter. But I have no time to waste on them ; come, let us instantly hasten to the Priory.’

“ I had burst into an agony of tears ; I had become almost wild with despair ; but all this was unavailing to soften the heart of lady Austincourt : she seized me roughly by the arm and commanded me to follow her to the carriage, which waited at some little distance from the cottage. It immediately drove to Austincourt Priory, and it had no sooner stopped there, than lady Austincourt threw a veil over me which entirely concealed my person from observation and almost blinded

me, as I could not distinguish any object through its impervious folds. Taking me by the hand, I was instantly conducted to the private entrance of her dressing-room, and the door was locked on me till her ladyship returned with Frederic. A few minutes after this she introduced lady Theodora Percy. Lady Austincourt then removed the veil from my face, and leading me to lady Theodora, exclaimed,—

“ ‘Behold this is Fanny Roseberry!’

“ ‘Fanny Roseberry,’ repeated lady Theodora; and oh! with what tender compassion did that angel of mercy then behold me.

“ ‘Yes,’ cried her ladyship, ‘it is she and you who must now decide the destiny of my Frederic. The one dares not dispute my commands; but you, my sweetest Theodora I must implore, I must sue to you to perform your promise, given to me so lately in behalf of my Frederic; and will you now recede? Oh! no I am certain you will not,’ and lady Austincourt instantly threw herself at the feet of lady Theodora, while she pronounced the following words:—

“ ‘Grant protection to that unfortunate creature before you who now pays too dearly for her folly. You behold the situation to which she is reduced, and I know that you pity her.’

“ To which lady Theodora replied, kindly taking my hand—

“ ‘I do indeed pity and feel for poor Fanny, and will do any thing to serve her.’

“ ‘But you must serve Frederic too!’ cried her ladyship, ‘you must swear to protect the yet unborn child of Fanny Roseberry, who, if it ever sees the light (and Heaven grant that it may not), must never know that Frederic is the author of its being; nor

shall Theodora ever be permitted to reveal it till Sir Mildred Austincourt is at the point of death ; or Theodora herself is in the hour of her dissolution. Soon as the infant is born, which will probably be in Italy, Theodora must instantly adopt it as some foundling fostered on her kind protection ; nor ever, till the above mentioned period arrives, disclose to mortal, however dear or precious that object may be to her heart, the mysterious origin of its birth. All this you must swear Theodora, or leave Fanny to her fate, which will be a cruel one, should you now refuse the terms of the conditions here proposed.'

"Neyer shall I forget the countenance of that pitying angel as she addressed the stern unfeeling lady Austincourt.

"'Heavenly Powers!' uttered she, 'and is this the purpose for which you brought me hither? to witness the unnatural conduct of that unfeeling monster? And can you thus renounce the ties of holy nature and of love, Frederic? will you abandon your tender offspring even before it is destined to behold the light?'

"Frederic answered not : he turned in silence from the beauteous suppliant ; while lady Austincourt, in a voice of thunder, vociferated—

"'Say either that you will become the wife of Frederic, or protect the child of Fanny Roseberry in the manner I have already proposed.'

"'Become the wife of Frederic!' no never!' uttered lady Theodora. 'I would perish in the bottomless ocean first. But the child of Fanny Roseberry I will preserve, cherish, protect, and foster, while there is a spark of life in these beating veins. I will take the oath lady Austincourt that you require,

and if I do not keep it holy in the sight of Heaven, may I for ever be renounced of that Heaven and of all good angels !' \*

" Lady Theodora had fallen on her knees ; she had clasped her beauteous hands together ; and involuntarily I dropped on mine and blessed her.

" ' Angels of mercy ever bless you,' uttered I.

" Lady Austincourt immediately led me away, but not before lady Theodora had extended her hand towards me. Methinks I now hear her parting words, for they thrilled through my soul.

" ' Farewell dear Fanny ; doubt not my friendship, in the hour when most you shall need the services of Theodora Percy.'

" I saw no more of Frederic or lady Austincourt from this hour, Sir Mildred ; but the ensuing morning I received instructions to hold myself in readiness to depart. I did so, and was conducted on board a vessel bound to Italy by a stranger in the service of lady Austincourt. He informed me that all my expences were already paid, and delivering me a small note which contained a sum of money, instantly departed. It was in the hand writing of him whom I once adored, and in these words :—

" ' FANNY—The enclosed is for your use when you arrive in Italy ; more will be transmitted when we think you require it.

' FREDERIC.'

" At the coldness in which this was written, after what had already passed, I could not be surprised ; my only astonishment was, that he had thought of me at all : and repairing quietly to my little cabin, I resigned myself to the further dispensation of what

Providence had yet in store for me. The winds proving favourable, I endured but small inconvenience till we arrived to the end of our voyage, which was much sooner than I expected, and the count Molini was waiting to receive me, and to conduct me to the convent of St. Julien. The holy sisterhood paid me every mark of respect and kindness. I was allowed every indulgence, and constantly permitted to attend the vespers in the chapel of Holy Mary.

“One morning I was called to attend the count Molini; he had brought a visitor with him.

“‘It is an English lady,’ cried one of the sisters.

“My heart beat tumultuously—

“‘Ah! who is it,’ uttered I. ‘Who can be anxious to see the poor deserted Fanny?’

And I immediately hastened to her presence. She removed the veil, Sir Mildred; it was lady Theodora Percy, and my transports were unutterable.

“‘Fanny,’ exclaimed she, ‘there is no longer any necessity for your remaining a boarder in the convent of St. Julien. My dear father is now no more. I arrived in this country only in time to receive his parting blessing. He is gone to the home of his fathers. I am now sole mistress of my father’s wealthy possessions. Sir Mildred Austincourt is no longer my guardian.’

“‘And lady Austincourt?’ enquired I.

“‘Is no longer your cruel oppressor,’ answered she. ‘She is dead, Fanny.’

“Then lady Theodora is absolved from her oath,’ uttered I.

“‘No,’ answered lady Theodora, ‘I am more strongly bound than ever strictly to perform it. I

repeated it to lady Austincourt in her expiring moments, and cannot now revoke it.'

"My emotions were strong and powerful, Sir Mildred, and the ensuing morning after I became an inmate in the house of my beloved protectress, I gave birth to my poor fatherless little Frances! and the sight of my new-born treasure, added to the kind attentions of that administering angel, restored me to tranquillity if not to permanent happiness again. I beheld my babe in the hands of her foster mother; and when she was again going to return to England, I thought I was prepared to part with my child. I had resigned it to the arms of that Being with whom alone I could be certain of its safety. I had taken my farewell of it, and as it lay sleeping imprinted on its tender lips a mother's parting kiss.

" 'Go, beloved innocent,' uttered I, 'go, and may thy voyage through life be happier than thy wretched mother's'

"Lady Theodora was powerfully affected—

" 'And are you wretched, Fanny?' uttered she.

To which I replied—

" 'Not while you are present, but when I shall no longer behold you, when I have lost my child.'

"Sir Mildred I could not support the conflict. I fell at the feet of lady Theodora, and wept bitterly.

" 'Tell me Fanny,' uttered she, were I to take you with me, would you for ever conceal yourself from the world. Should you once be discovered by Frederic Austincourt, you would no longer be safe even under my protection. He would force you from me, for he is now married, and would pursue you with redoubled vengeance.'

“ ‘ But if disguised,’ cried I, ‘ in male attire he would never know me.’

“ ‘ But your complexion,’ cried lady Theodora.

To which I answered,

“ ‘ I will stain that so completely with the juice of the Bermuda nut \* that it will be impossible to discover a shade of my former complexion. I have seen the process performed on one of the nuns in the convent of St. Julian; and it was an admirable deception.’

“ ‘ Since then you will have it so,” cried lady Theodora, ‘ I will not deny you the gratification which the sight of your infant will constantly afford you. In the mean while, I will consult with the Count and Countess Molini (the Count being then lately espoused) which is the most proper disguise to conceal your person from the prying eye of curiosity; but our arrangements must be speedy. In a few days we embark—the Count and Countess accompany me to England.’

“ Transported with the kindness of my lovely protectress, whose continued friendship towards me was unchanged, I forgot my former griefs in her enchanting smiles, and it being a day appointed for grand mass to be performed in the chapel of the Holy Mary, I accompanied lady Theodora to the hallowed sanctuary.

“ The service was more than usually solemn and affecting, and wrought powerfully on the feelings of

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\* The Bermuda nut: a tree which is the produce of Italy, the juice of which being compressed, is used to dye a colour of a dark olive.

the auditors. One young female in particular, attracted the attention and excited the sympathy of my benevolent protectress. Sir Mildred, it was Rosella Aubrey, who quickly imparting her sorrows to Lady Theodora Percy, found in her a real and undisguised friend; for Miss Aubrey from that day became the inmate of her benevolent mansion, whose doors were never yet closed against the unfortunate.

“ The Count Molini was now resorted to for advice, as to what disguise I should adopt for my transformation. When his amiable Countess suddenly exclaimed,

“ ‘ Suppose Fanny were to pass for my nephew—we might equip her in the costume of a young Italian cavalier; and she shall go by the name of Antonia. She is of a good height, and her figure well adapted for such a disguise, which, with the assistance of the Bermuda dye, will finish the deception.’

“ The plan was immediately adopted; and in a few hours I appeared in the presence of my protectress no longer Fanny Rosebery—but the young Italian, Signior Antonia. Nor could lady Theodora forbear smiling at my changed and altered appearance.’

“ Which, to do you ample justice,’ cried Sir Mildred, ‘ made you the strangest looking animal in existence; and to tell you truth, Fanny, I have a most unconquerable aversion to Signior Antonia, from the first hour of my beholding him; and I believe there are some here present who liked you no better than I did.’

“ ‘ Ah! sir,’ cried Fanny, ‘ and had I known the heartfelt anguish which the name of Antonia was to have wrung from the bosom of my protectress, when I took



shelter beneath her fostering roof, do you think that it would have been worn by me? With what anguish did I behold the situation to which I had exposed her, by my rash and unthinking folly! what days of sorrow have I known, what tears of penitence have I shed, when I beheld that lovely cheek, pale with conflicting and heart-wounding regret, that she had ever permitted me to assume such a disguise.

“ ‘Oh, Fanny,’ uttered she, one morning that she had returned from paying you a visit at the Priory, ‘Dear Fanny, to what uneasiness, to what tortures have I been condemned for your sake! Sir Mildred suspects me! Edmund too suspects me! All the world suspect me! and treat me unkindly for the sake of the mysterious Antonia. You have been seen conversing with me in private; and it has raised a tale of scandalous report,—ruinous to my hitherto bright unsullied fame, and destructive to my happiness. Walsingham too is returned; and would you believe it, Fanny! he too has treated me with coldness. Oh! Fanny, Fanny, how is all this to be avoided? I dare not reveal this mystery; and cannot long support this unmerited censure! Would that Death, that certain friend of all human wretchedness, relieve my misery!’

“ ‘O, Sir Mildred! you cannot judge of the anguish of my feelings at this intelligence. I wept, I sobbed, on the bosom of my kind protectress; and once again resolved to part for ever from my child; for though it had been given out that Antonia had departed for Italy, with the Count and Countess Molini, the tale was false, for Antonia has ever been concealed in the residence of lady Theodora Percy; but I was on the point of again throwing myself under the pro-

tection of the Count and Countess Molini: I was again on the very eve of my departure, and had again given my little Frances a mother's parting kiss, in order that my eternal absence from this country would restore peace to the wounded heart of my benefactress.

"When lady Theodora received the sudden intelligence, that the amiable Countess Molini was no more,—

" 'You must remain with me,' uttered she; 'there is no protection for you in Italy; and whatever be the consequence, you shall stay with me, and share the destiny of Theodora Percy.'

"Miss Aubery, you was present at this interview; and how faithfully did I promise to conceal myself in the hermitage, the day that lady Theodora expected to receive her guests at Heath Cottage; and so I intended to do, even if it had been till the hour of midnight; but supposing that you were all profoundly engaged in conversation, and not having the smallest idea of encountering any one in the shrubbery, at so late an hour in the evening, I darted from the place of my concealment, and my steps were pursued, as Mr. Edmund Austincourt has already informed you, by Mr. Walsingham. I ran with incredible speed towards the cottage; for though disguised in male attire, I had not forgot that I had a woman's fears about me; and his furious looks alarmed and terrified me! I had no refuge to escape from his threatened vengeance, but by concealing myself in the bed-chamber of my protectress; but no sooner was he gone than I flew down the stair-case and stationed myself at this door.

" 'I heard the accusation pronounced against the purity of that celestial angel! I heard her infamously

and falsely accused, and by Walsingham, and by Sir Mildred! Almighty powers! I heard no more. I presented myself before you. I have been inspired by heaven alone to disclose this confession, and to prove to you all, without a shadow of doubt, or yet existing mystery, the clearest

### TEST OF INNOCENCE.

"Oh, Fanny! dear injured Fanny! how much am I indebted to you!" cried Adolphus, extending his hand towards her at the same moment.

"And I think I am not one among the least that owe her a debt of obligation," exclaimed Sir Mildred, wiping his eyes, which had several times overflowed with genuine sensibility in the course of her affecting recital; "but here shall the sufferings and the griefs of Fanny Roseberry end. Henceforth, will I receive her as my daughter. She shall repose on my bosom; and, as Sterne says, "eat and drink of my cup," and I will be a father to her in the day of affliction. As to my little grand-daughter,"—

"She remains with me," uttered lady Theodora, "I am in truth her foster mother. I hope I have merited the appellation; and will continue to discharge my trust to so dear a charge with fidelity to the end of my existence."

"You shall do as you please my little enchantress," uttered Sir Mildred, "you have a right to rule us all; for you have this day proved that your power over us is invincible."

The happy party now adjourned only to meet the ensuing day to witness the celebration of lord Villeroys nuptials with the lovely and amiable Rosella Aubrey.

Edmund Austincourt, having now exceeded the ut-

most limits of his time at the Priory, was obliged to inform his father, that, though reluctantly, he must depart. At which Sir Mildred replied, "Not yet, you have another bridal knot to tie to-morrow morning." It was even so; Sir Mildred had been in private consultation for more than half an hour with his nephew, to whom he had imparted some intelligence which made them both smile when they came out of the study. And the secret was soon out, the lovely Theodora had consented to follow the example of her friend Rosella; and the following morning beheld Adolphus in the possession of a treasure for which he had long sighed,—the hand of lady Theodora Percy. It is true that some gloom had followed these events; for Frederic Austincourt had fallen the victim of his own rash folly in seeking vengeance on the destroyer of his domestic repose: he had met Col. Macpherson; had fought a duel with him in Paris, whither he had followed him; and the encounter had terminated fatally for Frederic, who paid the forfeit of his life by the unfortunate affair. To say that his untimely death was not lamented by his father and brother and even wept over by Fanny Roseberry would not do justice to the well known feelings of these excellent characters: but the memory of Frederic Austincourt could never be respected, nor the loss of such a being long deplored. THE HOUR OF RETRIBUTION was arrived, and it was impossible for the hand of mortal power to arrest the blow. Time threw a veil over the past sufferings of Sir Mildred Austincourt, who lived to a good old age to witness the exemplary conduct of his younger son rewarded by a second marriage with the amiable sister of lord Villeroy, and to see his

Orphan Boy the happy father of many lovely children. Meanwhile lady Theodora discharged her duty as conscientiously towards her fostered child, who as she ripened into womanhood, retained all her mother's loveliness, without living to prove either an example of her mother's weakness or a father's indiscretion.

THE END.

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DIRECTIONS TO THE BINDER.

|                                                                              |                            |
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| Adolphus declaring his Innocence before his Uncle, and engraved Title .....  | <i>to face each other.</i> |
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